

“Equal to All Alike”: A Cultural History of the Viol Consort in  
England, c.1550-1675

Loren Monte Ludwig  
Amherst, MA

Bachelor of Music, Oberlin College Conservatory, 1999  
Certificaat, Het Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag, 2001

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy of Fine Arts

McIntire Department of Music

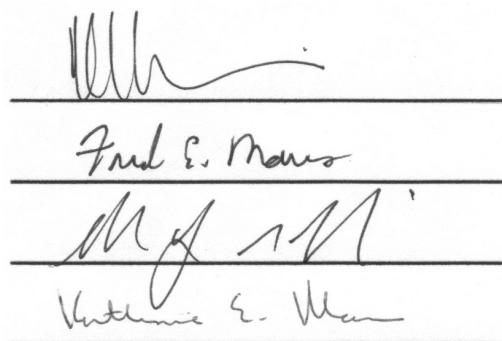
University of Virginia  
May, 2011

Professor **Bruce W. Holsinger**, Advisor

Associate Professor **Fred E. Maus**

Associate Professor **Richard J. Will**

Professor **Katharine E. Maus**



The image shows four handwritten signatures, each on a horizontal line. The first signature is 'B. W. Holsinger'. The second signature is 'Fred E. Maus'. The third signature is 'Richard J. Will'. The fourth signature is 'Katharine E. Maus'.

## Abstract

*"Equal to All Alike": A Cultural History of the Viol Consort in England, c.1550-1675* explores the socially interactive nature of amateur chamber music for viol consort, a repertory of ensemble music that flourished in 16th- and 17th-century English aristocratic circles. A critical reevaluation of surviving archival and musical materials from the period reveals that musical relationships between polyphonic parts were easily and readily transposed onto the social relationships between the living, breathing musicians who performed them. This dissertation is about those relationships—how composers of consort music used polyphonic means to choreograph social interactions, how early modern enthusiasts might have understood such experiences of musical community, and what cultural historians can learn about Renaissance English culture from the consort tradition. Close readings of consort music by William Byrd, John Dowland, Richard Farrant, Thomas Greaves, Benjamin Rogers, John Ward, William Lawes, and William White ground discussions of the ways that consort music, as a communal activity and musical tradition, participated in early modern understandings of the relationship between language and music, the nature and propriety of the passions, and the negotiation of social intimacy.

Each of four chapters locates the consort tradition within a particular affective domain, seeking to understand how consort playing engaged and shaped communal emotional experience. "Melancholy, Mourning, and Mimesis: The Viol Consort and English Sadness" positions the ensemble as a site of communal, ritual

behavior that registers the two related terms of Elizabethan “sadness”: melancholy and mourning. ““These things were never made for words’: ‘Instrumental’ Wit and Performative Self-Fashioning in the Consort Music of William Lawes,” theorizes the operation of “wit” and musical rhetoric in the fantasias of William Lawes (1602-1645). ““In Voice, in Heart, in Hand Agree’: Consort Music, Devotion, and ‘Liturgical *Habitus*’” documents consort music’s stylistic and cultural bases in Catholic liturgical music and charts its adaptation to new Protestant devotional practices and religious values. ““Musique fitting for the place’: The (Homo)Eroticism of the Viol Consort” addresses consort music’s capacity to stage interactions of pleasure, intimacy, and power among its performers in the context of early modern conceptions of male homosociality and homoeroticism.

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation was supported by grants and fellowships from the University of Virginia Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the UVA McIntire Department of Music, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in collaboration with the Institute for Historical Research, Senate House, London, the American Musicological Society, and the Viola da Gamba Society of America.

Many individuals shared their expertise, time, patience, and support with me as I worked on this project. I am deeply grateful. In particular, I would like to thank my adviser, Bruce Holsinger, and the other members of my committee, Fred Maus, Katharine Maus, and Richard Will; my teachers and colleagues in the University of Virginia's Critical and Comparative Studies in Music graduate program; the library staff of the UVA music library, including Erin Maywood, Winston Barham, Rya Martin, and Pam Howie and the Alderman Interlibrary Loan guru Lew Purifoy; the numerous scholars who offered ideas, assistance and encouragement including Elisabeth Le Guin, Linda Austern, Andrew Ashbee, David Pinto, Anna Sieben, Bonnie Gordon, Steven Plank, Edwina Cruise, and Doug Freundlich; my friends and colleagues who play consort music, especially Marie Dalby, Toby Szuts, and Brady Lanier (with whom I perform in the viol consort Quaver), Liam Byrne, Laura Vaughan, Mary Springfels, Brent Wissick, Tina Chancey, Dorothea Müller, Catharina Meints, James Caldwell, Alice Robbins, Mary Anne Ballard, Ken Slowik, Sarah Mead, Laurie Rabut, Larry Lipnik, and Simon Peterken and many others; friends and musical collaborators including Adriana Contino, Emily Eagen, Cleek Schrey, Spiff Wiegand, Adriane Post, Annette Bauer, Stephen Nachmanovich, and Matt Wyatt; my inspiring and loving friends and, of course, my family, Josette, Robert, Tobin, Stephen, and Joan.



## Contents

I.	Introduction	1
	<i>Polyphonic sociality</i>	5
	<i>Thomas Mace's Musick's Monument (1676)</i>	6
	<i>Performance and "embodied" musicology</i>	12
	<i>Habitus</i>	20
	<i>Chapter summaries</i>	23
II.	Melancholy, Mourning, and Mimesis: The Viol Consort and English Sadness	31
	<i>The consort song</i>	41
	<i>Elizabethan melancholy and The Paradise of Daynty Devices</i>	44
	<i>Richard Farrant's "Ah, alas you salt sea gods"</i>	51
	<i>Grief, mourning, and Protestant Injunction</i>	62
	<i>The "untimely death of Prince Henry"</i>	67
	<i>John Ward's "Weep forth your teares"</i>	72
III.	"These things were never made for words": "Instrumental" Wit and Performative Self-Fashioning in the Consort Music of William Lawes	92
	<i>Lawes' G-minor Aire, VDGS 337</i>	96
	<i>Wit and performative self-fashioning</i>	103
	<i>The rhetoric of "instrumental" wit</i>	109
	<i>Lawes' C-major fantasy, VdGS 81</i>	115
	<i>Wit and rules</i>	123
	<i>Lawes' a-minor fantasy, VdGS 72</i>	126
IV.	"In Voice, in Heart, in Hand Agree": Consort Music, Devotion, and "Liturgical <i>Habitus</i> "	135
	<i>The consort song and delegation of devotional voice</i>	138
	<i>Byrd's Catholic songs and the domestication of the viol consort</i>	148
	<i>The "liturgical" origins of the consort repertory</i>	153
	<i>The archaic cantus firmus and the pedagogy of the "plainsong" canon</i>	157
	<i>The cantus firmus as spiritual symbol</i>	171
	<i>The In nomine and "liturgical habitus"</i>	178
	<i>Signification, the "dittie," and the suitability of instruments in worship</i>	187
	<i>The anthem, the locus amoenus, and Ingelo's Bentivolio and Urania</i>	193
V.	"Musique fitting for the place": The (Homo)Eroticism of the Viol Consort	211
	<i>The Viol as (Homo)Erotic Symbol</i>	219
	<i>John Ward and the Musical Erotics of the Madrigal</i>	231
	<i>John Ward's "Oxford" Fantasia I (VdGS no. 21)</i>	242
	<i>William White, Imitation, and Musical "Equality"</i>	250
	<i>Thomas Mace, "Roguish" Tailors, and a Defense of the Consort</i>	265
	Bibliography	271

## I

## Introduction

*"[When] the Consort [is] compleat...the ear is pleased with the Harmony, and the mind is amused and entertained to observe the particular Parts how they dance to and from the Key, and from one Key to another, how they hunt one another, and in a manner imitate humane passions."*<sup>1</sup>

The "consort" to which Francis North (1637-1685) refers in his 1677 treatise is a small ensemble of violas da gamba, or "viols," stringed instruments favored by amateur musicians in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. North's account registers the playful sociality of the consort—the idea that its counterpoint models the social interactions of its players, that the different musical voices *"...hunt one another, and in a manner imitate humane passions."* For North, musical relationships between polyphonic parts were easily and readily transposed onto the social relationships between the living, breathing musicians who performed them. This dissertation is about those relationships—the ways in which consort music uses polyphonic means to choreograph social interactions, the ways that early modern enthusiasts might have understood such experiences of musical community, and what cultural historians can learn about Renaissance English culture from the consort tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> North, F., *A Philosophical Essay of Musick*. 1676, London. p. 32

During its ascendancy as a favorite musical pastime (roughly 1550-1675), consort music enlivened the music rooms of the houses of the English aristocracy. Seated in a circle, enthusiasts like Francis North—and perhaps a few visiting or employed professional musicians—played elaborate polyphony using a “chest” of treble, tenor, and bass viols (accompanied, sometimes, by an organ). The imitative fantasias, *In nomines*, madrigals, motets, consort songs, and dances that make up the repertory are generally accessible enough to be played by cultivated amateurs and represent, with their lush harmony and nuanced partwriting, a touchstone of Renaissance polyphony. Consort music was rarely performed in public, but was enjoyed as a musical activity for participants and—sometimes—a handful of select auditors. The repertory was rarely printed but rather circulated in manuscript partbook anthologies, often subsequently named after the households of their origin (the Shirley partbooks, the Dow partbooks, the Hamond partbooks, etc.). Modern scholars have identified and edited most of the known consort repertory to supply the lively community of contemporary amateur consort enthusiasts in Britain, the US, and Japan.

Though it was primarily music for amateurs—a term that suggested aristocratic status and the Latin *amatorem* (“lover of”) more strongly than its modern connotation of inexpertness—consort music was composed by professional—or at least highly-trained—musicians. Some composers, such as John Ward (1571–1638) and William Lawes (1602–1645), were born into (or adopted) gentlemanly status, but most trained as choristers and grew up to be employed by the church, Court, or the lavish musical establishments of the wealthy aristocracy. In

*The Early History of the Viol* (1984), Ian Woodfield chronicles the role of the instrument in the musical training of choristers during—especially—the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> In choir schools, consort music was used to teach music notation (“pricksong”) and the skills, important to professional singers of liturgical music, necessary to perform complex polyphony. The consort song, which originated as the accompaniment to dramatic productions staged by “children’s companies” of choristers, and the *In nomine*, a compositional form with strong ties to chorister pedagogy, had important and lasting influence on the stylistic development of consort music. When choristers trained on viols grew up and took their places as composers, performers, and teachers of aristocratic amateurs, they brought ensemble music for viols with them into the country houses and music rooms of their patrons and employers. Thus the viol consort is associated with two connected but distinct worlds, educational choral institutions and private amateur social music making.

Consort music’s formal and voice leading conventions represent an inheritance from sixteenth century English liturgical polyphony—with which consort music coexisted for nearly a hundred years—and the Italian madrigal, which had been enthusiastically adopted by English musicians at the end of the sixteenth century. These two influences, it is important to emphasize, were the province of singers. Several centuries of musical history have driven a wedge between the domains of vocal and instrumental music, a distinction that would likely have puzzled the early modern performers of collections of music that were

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<sup>2</sup> See also Stephen Morris’ M.A. Thesis, S.M. Morris, “Viol Consorts and Music Education in Elizabethan and Jacobean England (1558-1625)” (Montreal: McGill University, 1986).

often advertised as “apt for voyces or viols.” Though consort music represents one of the first truly “instrumental” idioms, it remained deeply indebted to a musical sensibility wedded to the act of singing. The repertory cannot be understood without careful attention to the vocal forms—the madrigals, motets, hymns, consort and lute songs, anthems, and ayres—that were continuous with it, a point that I explore in different ways in each chapter. Even the fantasia, that “purely” instrumental form for consort, reveals phrase lengths consistent—in most cases—with lung capacity and a pitch compass coterminous with contemporaneous vocal ranges. Line-level details—the easy “singability” of most imitative points as well as their tendency to evoke syllabic patterns of accent and contour familiar from spoken English or Italian, or the use of call-and-response templates adapted from the liturgy—are suggestive of the viol’s role as a sort of prosthetic voice.

In addition to its close relationship to English and Italian vocal idioms, the surviving repertory for viol consort also shows other musical influences. These include continental forms such as the French chanson, English “folk” music in the guise of tunes like “Browning” and “Walsingham”, and, of course, dance music and instrumental diminutions from England and the continent. But the consort repertory was particularly influenced by the contrapuntal rigor developed in the motet and madrigal, and it is consort music as *polyphony* that is the primary concern of this dissertation.

## Polyphonic Sociality

One-on-a-part polyphony organizes its players into relationships with each other that are at once “musical” and “social.” At the most basic level, playing viols together requires performers to face each other, to make eye contact or demurely glance away, to smile or wink conspiratorially or to intimidate with a show of impassivity or disinterest. Instruments introduce issues of competency—how “cunningly” does one play (to borrow an early modern construction)? Does facility demonstrate mastery, or reveal an unseemly professionalism? Does a player take himself too seriously, or does he compromise others’ enjoyment by missing too many notes or being too careless with his tuning? Who plays bass? Who gets to play “top” treble—and who *has* to play tenor? As anyone who has tried to sort viol players into ensembles at a summer workshop or festival can tell you, consorts are political.

Polyphony curates this same social energy—its formal and voice leading conventions channel the sociality of its players into complex and stylized interactions. Imitation, register, textural density, dissonance and consonance, rhythmic activity, syncopation, homophony versus heterophony, melodic contour, and other “musical” phenomena become in consort music dynamics of interaction among its participants. This is not (just) metaphor and homology. An imitative entrance, for example, *actually requires people to imitate each other*—both the bodily motions necessary to elicit sound from the viol as well as the “rhetoric” through which the human language instinct creates a sense of melody from an

abstract series of tones. Imitation has social consequences—consequences that are culturally and historically contingent. In Renaissance England imitation could signal assent, or sycophancy, or erotic intimacy—I explore several of these possibilities in the chapters that follow. Changes in musical texture—either in the total number of players making sound at any given moment or the relative simultaneity of their parts—“homophony” versus “heterophony”—suggest the most basic mammalian patterns of group behavior. We are social animals. We notice who’s speaking with whom and who is silent. We register the difference in mood induced by a sudden hush in a group of individuals who have been blithely chattering away. These are the sorts of interactions that are musically staged in consort music, that composers crafted into their polyphony, and that, I claim, enthusiasts *sought* in the repertory. The four chapters of this dissertation investigate the ways that consort music’s polyphony was understood to inflect and express social relationships.

### **Thomas Mace’s *Musick’s Monument* (1676)**

The title of my dissertation borrows a phrase from Thomas Mace’s *Musick’s Monument* (1676), a treatise on the lute and viol that offers a rich—if polemical—account of consort playing.<sup>3</sup> Mace was a Gentleman, Royalist, and amateur music enthusiast. His exhaustive treatment—his treatise approaches 300 closely-printed sides—of the lute and lute playing is followed by a shorter, almost fanciful guide to

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<sup>3</sup> I discuss various passages of Mace at length in each of my chapters.

the viol and consort playing. If *Musick's Monument* reveals Mace to have been a master teacher of the lute, he clearly also loved the viol.

Having said so much in my Former Discourse, concerning the Lute...It may be thought, I am so great a Lover of It, that I make Light Esteem of any other Instrument [...]; but [I] Love the Viol in a very High Degree; yea close unto the Lute...And this I shall presume to say, That if I Excel in Either, it is most certainly upon the Viol.<sup>4</sup>

Amid crotchety complaints about the intrusion of the violin into English music and rheumy visions of a Rube Goldberg-like “pedal” keyboard and “musick room,” Mace penned an extended, if not entirely reliable, encomium to the consort music for viols he enjoyed as a younger man. During the “sober times” before the chaos of the Civil War and Interregnum (1642-1660), Mace rhapsodizes,

We had for our Grave Musick, Fancies of 3, 4, 5, and 6 Parts to the Organ; Interpos'd (now and then) with some Pavins, Allmaines, Solemn, and Sweet Delightful Ayres; all which were (as it were) so many Pathettical Stories, Rhetorical, and Sublime Discourses; Subtil, and Accute Argumentations; so Suitable, and Agreeing to the Inward, Secret, and Intellectual Faculties of the Soul and Mind; that to set

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<sup>4</sup> T. Mace, *Musick's Monument* (London, 1676), 231.



Them forth according to their True Praise, there are no Words  
Sufficient in Language...<sup>5</sup>

This passage is justly famous for its enthusiasm for consort music. I read it (here and in a more extended treatment in my third chapter) for Mace's emphasis on the interactive nature of playing the repertory, the "stories," "discourses" and "argumentations" that serve as currencies of its sociality.

Of course, all chamber music is social. But consort music *foregrounds* the social, a characteristic that Mace registers with his comparisons to rhetoric and conversation. Mace's "social" conception of the repertory is affirmed by his repeated assertions that players of consort music are, as my title echoes, "equal to all alike." As opposed to the new, "Baroque" Restoration music for violins and continuo in which "the Scoulding Violins will out-Top Them All," consort music is performed

upon so many Equal, and Truly-Sciz'd Viols; and so Exactly Strung,  
Tun'd, and Play'd upon, as no one Part was any Impediment to the  
Other; but still (as the Composition required) by Intervals, each Part  
Amplified, and Heightned the Other; The Organ Evenly, Softly, and  
Sweetly Acchording to All.<sup>6</sup>

In consort music, no player is so loud that he "out-tops" any other part. The gentlemen Mace imagines gathered to enjoy the "sublime discourses" of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

polyphony sit as equals, a relationship reaffirmed and represented by musical style (“each part amplified, and heightened the other”). Mace recognized the homology between musical parts and social relationships, and thus appreciated the stakes of “equality” in social music making.

Interestingly, the two modern accounts of consort music that remark on the prominence of “equality” in Mace’s treatise, by the cultural historian Penelope Gouk and the historian of English literature Harold Love, are both outside the mainstream of historical musicology.<sup>7</sup> Gouk mentions Mace in an article that chronicles the overlapping communities of amateur chamber musicians and “natural philosophers” in seventeenth-century Cambridge. Though they possessed a range of political and religious affiliations, the musicians in this circle, Gouk writes, were “literally obliged to harmonize their differences in the act of making music together.” Yet, as Gouk describes, the “equality” of Mace’s account, like the famous opening clause of the American Declaration of Independence from a century later, was part of a discourse committed to the *maintenance* of social hierarchies. In Mace’s elaborate description of his ideal “musick room” for “auditors” of consort music, for example, Mace is careful to specify construction of multiple galleries to avoid the “crowding” together of “persons of different qualitties.”<sup>8</sup> In Love’s summary of this idea, “[Consort music] encoded an idealized image of the gentry as a community of equals while, at the same time, providing release from the tensions of hierarchy in the state and in the family. In refusing a dominant role to any single part it was also reasserting—even

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<sup>7</sup> P. Gouk, “Performance Practice: Music, Medicine, and Natural Philosophy in Interregnum Oxford,” *The British Society for the History of Science* 29 (1996): 282; H. Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 30.

<sup>8</sup> Mace, *Musick’s Monument*, 241.

when played by musicians who were political royalists—a consensual conception of the ideal state.”<sup>9</sup> Love’s enumeration of this ideological trajectory reminds us that caution is called for in the interpretation the tropes of “harmony” and “equality” that pepper early modern accounts of consort playing.

The tensions between the “equality” of consort music’s polyphonic parts and the rigidly hierarchical aristocratic society in which it was played are revealed, in part, in the uncertain role of the organ in consort music. Current scholarly consensus holds that the surviving organ parts in Jacobean and Caroline consort music were played by a professional musician to help the gentleman amateurs stay together and in tune.<sup>10</sup> Mace provides a rare account of the organ in consort playing, writing that

the Organ stands us in stead of a Holding, Vniting-Constant-Friend;  
and is as a Touch-stone, to try the certainty of All Things; especially  
the Well-keeping the Instruments in Tune, &c.<sup>11</sup>

Playing “on the organs” was not an amateur activity, but comprised a necessary part of the training of professional church musicians and composers. Surviving organ parts of consort music by Ward, Lawes, Hingeston, and numerous other composers, as well as rare accounts such as Mace’s, above, suggest that in some instances, at

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<sup>9</sup> Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Holman, “‘Evenly, softly, and sweetly according to all’: The organ Accompaniment of English consort music,” in *John Jenkins and his Time: Studies in English Consort Music*, ed. Andrew Ashbee (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1996); Annette Otterstedt and Hans Reiners, “The Compatibility of the Viol Consort with the Organ in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *Chelys: The journal of the Viola da Gamba Society* 25 (1996): 32.

<sup>11</sup> Mace, *Musick’s Monument*, 242.

least, the consort was comprised of two “castes” of players, the gentleman violists and the hired professional who “spotted” them. Today, it is extremely rare to find consort music accompanied by organ, both because of the rarity of the right sort of organ (even small “continuo” organs are often too loud and difficult for amateur musicians to procure) and because modern musical training, the availability of scores, and electronic tuners have obviated much of the need for Mace’s “uniting-constant-friend.” Certainly consort music was often played “unaccompanied,” a situation that this dissertation assumes throughout, but organ accompaniment shouldn’t be discounted as a factor that sometimes shaped the repertory’s musical and social operations and meanings.

Mace’s treatise represents a rich, if complex, contemporaneous account of consort playing. In this dissertation I draw widely on published historical sources on music such as *Musick’s Monument*, as well a wide range of other historical and archival materials. Printed music, poetry, plays, and treatises on a wide variety of topics inform this study, as do archival materials such as letters, diaries, commonplace books, and above all manuscript collections of consort music, many of which contain a wealth of fascinating material scribbled in their margins. Nearly all of the known surviving consort music has been documented and edited by the meticulous and tireless efforts of Gordon Dodd, Andrew Ashbee, Pamela Willetts, David Pinto, Richard Charteris, Margaret Crum, Craig Monson and numerous others. These scholars are part of a long tradition of detailed scholarship on English music, and much of the historical material I use will be familiar to cognoscenti. However, though some of this material has found its way into cultural historical accounts of

English music by scholars like Gretchen Finney, Linda Austern, and Penelope Gouk, much of it has not. This dissertation, though grounded in historical sources and indebted to archival musicology, seeks to speak to a broad set of both cultural historical and methodological questions. Each of my chapters, summarized in depth below, respond to ongoing conversations across multiple disciplines (musicology, English history, history of emotion, English literature, etc.) focused by the cultural “categories”—melancholy/mourning, wit, devotion, and passionate friendship—that anchor them. My third chapter, for example, addresses issues such as secularization and sacralization during the Reformation and the preservation of covert modes of Catholic identity, and engages recent work on the corporate and corporeal nature of *habitus*. My broader cultural historical agenda is informed by critical work in musicology that interrogates the role of performance in the generation of musical meaning and that seeks to theorize the complex relationships between music, body, and identity. This scholarship, exemplified by Suzanne Cusick, Elisabeth Le Guin, and Bruce Holsinger, responds—in an exciting range of ways—to the call to integrate performance (both as a theoretical concept and as a highly specific and particularized activity) into music historiography.

### **Performance and “embodied” musicology**

In several influential essays, Suzanne Cusick theorizes the relationship between performing bodies, music, and identity.<sup>12</sup> “Musical performance,” she writes, “is partly (but not entirely) the culturally intelligible performance of bodies.”<sup>13</sup> Singing or playing an instrument (Cusick is a keyboard player) involves learning to use the body in particular, disciplined ways—to control one’s hands, feet, torso, diaphragm, tongue, etc. according to the exigencies of producing sound. In a conceptual lineage traceable through Judith Butler to Michele Foucault, “discipline” registers the negotiation of power that underlies the performance of a gendered identity. In relation to musical performance, Cusick asks, “What disciplines are imposed on the bodies which produce sound? What meanings are ascribed to the public display or the deliberate concealment of those disciplines? When do those meanings constitute gender for the performers? When can they be read as metaphors for gender by an audience?”<sup>14</sup> Cusick’s writing reveals the congruence of “music” and (gendered) “identity” in acts of musical performance.

But musical performance, according to Cusick, also defines and enacts *relationships*—between performer(s), composer, the “music,” and the audience. Music is *social*. In her reading of the Indigo Girls’ song “Ghost” (1992), for example, Cusick describes a vocal duet performance that is constitutive both of its singers’

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<sup>12</sup> S.G. Cusick, “On a Lesbian Relation with Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight,” in *In Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. P. Brett, E. Wood, and G.C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67-83; S.G. Cusick, “‘There Was Not One Lady Who Failed to Shed a Tear’: Arianna’s Lament and the Construction of Modern Womanhood,” *Early Music* 22, no. 1 (1994): 21-43; S.G. Cusick, “Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem,” *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994): 8-27; S.G. Cusick, “On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex,” in *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, ed. E. Barkin and L. Hamessley (Zurich and Los Angeles: Carciofoli Verlagshaus, 1999), 25-49.

<sup>13</sup> Cusick, “On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex,” 27.

<sup>14</sup> Cusick, “Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem,” 17.

identity and their (musical) relationship to one another. “With their voices they perform themselves as ‘girls’ (even as ‘good girls’) whose voices (bodies) ‘fit together perfectly’ and ‘sound spectacular’ in unexpected, identity blurring, erotically charged ways. With their voices, then, they perform their gender, their sex, and a sexuality (a way bodies might relate intimately to each other) that is culturally intelligible in our time as lesbian.”<sup>15</sup> Music, in Cusick’s reading, defines the “culturally intelligible” relationship between the two singers and serves as a metaphor through which listeners can interpret it (“as lesbian”). Music here is a currency of sociality, a social “discourse.”

Like Cusick, my work posits the performing body as a link between musical and social domains. Consort music stages bodies in interaction, both literally—musicians crowded around a tablebook, for example, cribbing bowings and fingerings from each other—and musically—in sensual chains of parallel thirds like the Indigo Girls’ “Ghost.” Early modern sources reveal myriad connections between embodied practices and the constitution of identity. Dance and music treatises and courtesy manuals entrained aristocratic bodily performances—the viol virtuoso Christopher Simpson, for example, cautions readers of his treatise *Chelys* (1667) to avoid poor bow technique because it will “cause the whole body to shake; which (by all means) must be avoyded; as also any other indecent Gesture.”<sup>16</sup> Consort music, with its intricate interweaving of musical parts performed by bodies engaged in a social discourse of pleasure and intimacy, offers fertile territory for an elaboration

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<sup>15</sup> Cusick, “On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex,” 37.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Simpson, *Chelys minuritionum artificio exornata/The Division-viol, or The Art of Playing Extempore upon a Ground* (London, 1665), 8.

of socially embodied musical practices. Where my work parts ways with Cusick is my privileging of the experience of the performers themselves in musical interactions. Identity, particularly *sexual* identity as constituted in musical performance, is Cusick's quarry. Identity emerges as an analytical category in this dissertation only as an epiphenomenon of the polyphonic musical sociality that is its focus.

With *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (2002), Elisabeth Le Guin poses the performing body as her primary informant in a study of the aesthetic and cultural history of Boccherini's music.<sup>17</sup> Le Guin, like Cusick, is sensitive to the ways that musical performance is constitutive of subjectivity.<sup>18</sup> More radically, she argues that musical subjectivity is fungible—that it can arc across historical and cultural distance and carry with it historically particular meanings. This claim influences my work in two interconnected ways: it offers an elegant and daring theorization of the relationship between historical acts of performance and modern “acts” of scholarship, and it suggests that (embodied) musical experience can inform the writing of cultural history, a practice Le Guin dubs “carnal musicology.”

In her cultural historical analysis of Boccherini's solo and chamber music, Le Guin raises two methodological questions: first, how can a performer/scholar's own individual, kinesthetic responses serve as a source of generalizable, “authoritative” musical or historical knowledge? And second: what is the nature of the relationship between the historical subjectivity of the dead composer and that of the living

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<sup>17</sup> Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: an Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> I use “subjectivity” (as opposed to “identity”) here both in following Le Guin's usage and because it emphasizes the process of coming into being over the “continuity” suggested by the word “identity.”



performer/scholar that “embodies” his (the composer’s) music? These questions register Le Guin’s efforts to reconfigure the relationship between text and act in music scholarship. “I propose performance and analysis as two faces of interpretation,” she writes, “an act which is both art and science. If we accept this (and doing so is fundamental to the epistemology of a carnal musicology) the whole simplistic and ultimately rather boring notion of an authoritative reading simply auto-digests, leaving us with its compost: that complex layering of interpretations that builds up around any work of art, and, culturally speaking, constitutes the nourishment it must have in order to survive.”<sup>19</sup> Different bodies, in other words, will generate different readings, and this variety is essential to (or even constitutive of) a work’s meaning.

Like Le Guin’s, my own experience as a performer and teacher informs, on one level or another, the sorts of claims that I make and the ways in which I make them. I have resisted, where possible, *theorizing* the ways that my experience playing consort music on viols inflects what I intend as a primarily cultural-historical, as opposed to meta-theoretical, project. For better or worse, this work will stand or fall based on its own structural integrity, independent of the methodological scaffolding that serves, often enough, to block the view of the edifice itself. If this sounds a bit polemical, it is—performer/scholars have spent enough keystrokes already “justifying” the left-hand term of label whose slash misleadingly divides a professional identity that does not *feel* particularly divided. Let non-performing musicologists preface their scholarship with meta-theoretical

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<sup>19</sup> Le Guin, *Boccherini’s body*, 26.

explanations about how the *absence* of first-hand musical experience enriches their arguments.

*Boccherini's Body* is most successful when Le Guin uses thick historical description to frame a lucid and poetic account of her insights as a solo cellist. Contrastingly, my work focuses on the relational and the communal meanings generated among members of an ensemble. Boccherini's writing for cello is both idiosyncratic and highly virtuosic—it demands a level of embodied engagement and intention on the part of its performer that, Le Guin suggests, constitutes something akin to subjectivity. “[A]s a living performer of Boccherini’s sonata, a work which he wrote for himself to play,” she writes, “I am aware of acting the connection between parts of someone who cannot be here in the flesh. I have become not just his hands, but his binding agent, the continuity, the consciousness; it is only a step over from the work of maintaining my own person as some kind of unitary thing, the necessary daily fiction of establishing and keeping a hold on identity.”<sup>20</sup> Consort music rarely requires this level of instrumental virtuosity, and few of its composers can be said to have been “identified” with the viol in the way that Boccherini was with the cello. Yet I suggest that something of the “continuity” Le Guin describes is enacted between members of a consort when they play polyphony cultivated to activate and enliven social interaction.

Le Guin also attempts, with perhaps less than complete success, to extend her “carnal” musicological approach to chamber music—to investigate the ways that, in her words, “the corporate both is, and is not, the corporeal.” In a chapter on

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 24.

Boccherini's string quartets, Le Guin documents an "experimental" analysis consisting of a detailed conversation among the members of her quartet as they rehearse Boccherini's string quartet in E major, Op. 15, number 3. Le Guin and her colleagues generate four continua to help guide their collective analysis: pleasure/unpleasantness, ease/difficulty, connection/isolation (between members of the ensemble), and good results/bad results. The analysis consists of a transcription of discussion among the four ensemble members of their individual embodied experiences of playing their own part and a "comparing of notes" about how those experiences were mutually amplified or contradicted. Le Guin couples this experimental analysis with a standard harmonic/structural analysis of the quartet. As one might expect, each performer describes moments of connection and moments of isolation, moments of empathy and kinesthetic sensitivity and moments of physical discomfort and self-involvedness.

While Le Guin's experiment succeeds in demonstrating the complexity of the act of playing chamber music, it yields little in the way of particular cultural historical knowledge. Le Guin's "conversational" analysis is not historical—or, rather, it is historically embedded in its own time—the first decade of the new millennium. Beyond her own formidable historical knowledge, there is little to connect the performers' experience (or the language and metaphors they use to describe it) to historically particular meanings. The continua (pleasure/unpleasantness, ease/difficulty, etc.) that frames their experience seemingly have nothing to do with the *sensibilité* central to eighteenth-century aesthetics and to whose elegant elaboration Le Guin dedicates much of her book.

Performer agency generates multiple musical interpretations (the *strata* of Le Guin's "complex layering," above), confusing the capacity of music to serve as a carrier of historical meaning. Agency (both that of historical and modern subjects) appears to *erode* the fixity of emergent knowledge of history. This is the central challenge of using performance as a source of knowledge about the past: performers—both then and now—"write" and "rewrite" history by making choices in the moments of playing and listening. Though these choices are constrained by cultural and historical factors—one might say that the category of "culture," in this case, corresponds to the particular range of choices available to its members—they nevertheless muddy the historiographical waters considerably.

My answer to this challenge entails grounding my work as firmly as possible in historical particularity—choosing analytical and descriptive categories based on their resonance with the surviving traces of English Renaissance culture. To the extent possible, I describe my musical examples using the language and concepts of the period, a sort of "historically informed" analysis.<sup>21</sup> Composers and theorists of the period had an extremely well-developed and refined way of thinking about and teaching polyphony, and I seek in their lexicon of imitative "points," "bindings" (suspensions), "discords" (dissonances), and "closes" (cadences) the theoretical richness with which they imbued these terms. The four chapters of this dissertation

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<sup>21</sup> I self-consciously evoke the phrase "historical performance" here to register both a particular ideology of performance as well as the complex critical discourse that has developed around it. See, for example, Nicholas Kenyon, ed., *Authenticity and early music: a symposium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Lydia Goehr, *The imaginary museum of musical works: an essay in the philosophy of music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Richard Taruskin, *Text and act: essays on music and performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); John Butt, *Playing with history: the historical approach to musical performance* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

are organized according to concepts—melancholy/mourning, wit, devotion, and passionate friendship—that any early modern player of consort music would have recognized. The wealth of primary and secondary sources dedicated to each of these cultural domains testifies—and contributes—to their conceptual wealth. At the same time, each chapter is motivated by my experience as a player, performer, and teacher of consort music—by the commonplace among modern players, for example, that William Lawes is “witty” or my own experience playing Dowland’s *Lachrimae* pavans as mournful memorial.

### ***Habitus***

Cusick’s and Le Guin’s accounts of subjectivity, music, and bodies register the domain of experience suggested by the term “*habitus*,” a concept that subtends much of my thinking about consort music’s emergent social meanings. *Habitus* describes the embodied and affective condition of being a person in a particular place and time, the “feeling world” that one comes to inhabit by acquiring basic cultural competencies like language, habits of dress, and social mores; the emotional substrata that develops as one achieves a culturally and historically located subjectivity. *Habitus* is the frontier between nature and nurture, it registers the “dispositions” and habits that order experience and that both shape and respond to one’s interactions with the world. Bruce Smith describes *habitus* as “Bourdieu’s coinage for the range of ‘strategies’ open to actors in a given situation[...], the collective ‘matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions’ within which

individuals improvise behavior.”<sup>22</sup> Though *habitus* is familiar to many scholars in the Humanities as part of the social theory of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu, it has an ancient and complex pedigree in Classical and medieval Latinity.<sup>23</sup> Recent scholarship by Bruce Holsinger and Katharine Breen has developed an historically particularized account of the *habitus* articulated in medieval monasticism and religious pedagogy and revealed in the relationships between liturgy and literary production.<sup>24</sup> Though Renaissance English culture was deeply informed by the religious and Humanist lineage shaped by medieval and Classical notions of *habitus*, I am aware of little scholarship on the period that uses it as an analytical category (Smith, above, makes only brief mention of it) and *none* that traces its presence in early modern English sources or thinking.

The notion of *habitus* informs this dissertation in two ways: it describes a particular aspect of human experience—the embodied and affective dimensions of sociality, the condition of being a “self” while interacting with other people—essential to social music making; and it provides a conceptual framework for the “liminality”—the “space between” fixtures like body/mind, self/other, text/act—that seems to confront, at every turn, the process of writing a cultural history of music. The “social meanings” that I read in consort music are the result of crosstalk between social competencies (such as the witty use of language to perform an aristocratic identity) and polyphonic musical conventions. *Habitus* offers a critical

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<sup>22</sup> B.R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 19.

<sup>23</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 1990); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process, Vol. I*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen Books, 1978).

<sup>24</sup> B. Holsinger, “Liturgy,” in *Middle English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Katharine Breen, *Imagining an English Reading Public, 1150-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

foothold on this notion of “social competencies” and emphasizes their emotional and expressive dimensions—aspects that move easily across domains of experience. Its patterns of behavior and emotion “are enduring and transferrable from one context to another, [and] shift in relation to specific contexts and over time.”<sup>25</sup> Imitation, for example, serves as an evocative concept in my chapter on homoeroticism precisely because *musical* imitation in consort music suggested to its players particular behaviors and attitudes that were likely learned early in life in *other* domains (the home, the Inns of Court, etc.) as part of the process of acquiring an aristocratic male subjectivity.

*Habitus*, like music, is embodied. Bourdieu refers to this as the bodily *hexis*, in which “the body is the site of incorporated history.”<sup>26</sup> *Habitus* thus becomes a powerful accessory to understanding musical style, offering a way of reading particular musical details for the social meanings that are realized in their performance. Musical style in consort music, I argue throughout this dissertation, is socially motivated. Compositional details minutely shape the way that musicians interact with each other, in part by requiring them to enlist skills—such as reading music and playing instruments—that were learned as part of the acquisition of a historically and culturally specific *habitus*. In her recent study of the role of *habitus* in “the medieval imagination,” Katharine Breen notes Aristotle’s explanation of “the paradigmatic *habitus* of knowledge and virtue by analogy to building, wrestling, and

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/bourdieu-and-habitus/>

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 437.

playing the lyre.”<sup>27</sup> In my chapter on consort music as a repository of “liturgical *habitus*,” I discuss devotional writing from the mid-seventeenth century that represents a continuity of this tradition—one that holds that the careful repetition of bodily movements required to master a musical instrument can serve to make “voice, [...] hand, [and] heart agree.”

The body of this dissertation is comprised of four chapters, each of which details a particular affective or relational domain that served, I argue, to frame consort music’s polyphonic sociality. In each case, my strategy has been to draw on contemporaneous texts of various sorts to develop an account of each domain, a sort of “thick description,” that guides my close readings of select pieces of consort music. These close readings, ideally, pay back dividends, offering insight into early modern conceptions of, for example, the erotic dimensions of passionate friendship that are uniquely available through the study of music. Cumulatively, these four chapters offer points of reference for the complexly intimate communal experience of playing consort music, a range of cultural resources that both informed and were shaped by the repertory’s composers and players.

### Chapter summaries

*“Melancholy, Mourning, and Mimesis: The Viol Consort and English Sadness”*  
positions the viol consort as a site of communal, ritual behavior that registers the related tropes of the two primary terms of Elizabethan “sadness”: melancholy and

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<sup>27</sup> Breen, *Imagining an English Reading Public, 1150-1400*, 44.



mourning. I trace the influence of the “consort song” of the second half of the sixteenth century, a form for solo voice and four viols, on the seventeenth-century archetype of the melancholic “*Inamorato*,” the solitary (and perhaps solipsistic) poet and musician described in Burton’s monumental *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1623). Decades earlier, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), a compilation of moralizing poetry that served as a popular source of texts for consort songs, revealed an ambivalent conception of melancholy as both a source of poetic inspiration and threat of moral corruption. I read a related ambivalence in Richard Farrant’s consort song “A alas, you salt sea gods”, which stages musically coded desire in the poetic tropes of sadness. The consort song appeared as musical accompaniment in Elizabethan productions of chorister drama, and I demonstrate how the melancholic musical tropes of the consort song repertory served as an important influence both on the development of consort music *and* ideas of melancholy during subsequent decades.

While the melancholic is, according to Timothy Bright (1551-1615), “delighted more in solitarines and obscurity,” mourning is social, collecting its sufferers in the folds of community torn by death or absence. Dowland’s *Lachrimae, or Seaven Teares* (1604), a collection of five-part pavans for viol consort, reveals an adaptation of the musical tropes of melancholy to stylized, communal musical mourning. Rosenwein’s *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (2006) serves as one theoretical point of orientation for my chapter, as does scholarship by Tobias Doring and Katharine Goodland that documents the changes to ritual responses to death precipitated by Protestant reform. In particular, the Thirty-Nine

Articles of 1563 eliminated many of the Catholic ritual practices that had structured social responses to grief and mourning. I argue that playing consort music served as a site of a “surrogate” mourning ritual, one that allied the sensual pleasure of social music making to the Elizabethan awareness of the peculiar pleasure to found in expressions of grief. The death of Prince Henry in 1612, son of James I and heir to the English throne, was a national tragedy that precipitated a large corpus of “mourning” songs for voices and viols by Jacobean composers. I analyze John Ward’s elegiac madrigal “Weep forth your teares” from the *First Set of English Madrigals* (1613), a piece that exemplifies the communal and mimetic nature of musical weeping and the appropriation of melancholic musical tropes to consort music’s mournful polyphony.

Chapter 2, “*“These things were never made for words”: ‘Instrumental’ Wit and Performative Self-Fashioning in the Consort Music of William Lawes,*” theorizes the operation of “wit” in the consort music of William Lawes (1602-1645). One critical concern of this dissertation is the relationship between language and music, a relationship of primary importance to early modern music theory and one that governed, at nearly every step, the development of consort music. Early modern writings on wit reveal a particular critical perspective on this relationship, one that motivates my close readings of Lawes’ consort music. Accounts in courtesy manuals and treatises on poetry and rhetoric register wit’s capacity to intervene in the machinations of language and its deployment as a key strategy in the performance of aristocratic identity. These “instrumental” operations of wit, I argue, are similarly

operative in consort music, a repertory that staged players in “conversation” as part of the musical cultivation of aristocratic identities. In addition to early modern theories of wit and rhetoric by writers including Henry Peacham, George Puttenham, Castiglione, Stefano Guazzo, and Thomas Hobbes, John Jenkins’ “jest” about consort playing from *Merry Passages and Jeasts* (Gb-Lbl Harleian MS. 6395) and Anthony Wood’s description of Lawes’ consort music focus my discussion.

The musical language of consort music—as anyone familiar with Lawes’ music can attest—is, like spoken language, susceptible to willful—(witty?)—misuse and malapropism. Lawes’ consort music is known for its unconventional and often “uncomfortable” partwriting—unexpected accidentals, dissonant melodic intervals, misplaced resolutions and other voice leading “transgressions” appear regularly in his compositions. These gambits subvert compositional convention as codified by theorists like Morley and Coprario and make playing Lawes’ consort music a difficult but distinctively *pleasurable* experience. Lawes’ music was beloved by early modern connoisseurs, including Charles I, and is seen as the apotheosis of Caroline consort music by modern enthusiasts, yet the small corpus of Lawes scholarship does not account for its strangely appealing “wrongness.” Using wit as a template for the performative intervention in the rules of language, I argue that playing Lawes’ consort music creates opportunities for the exercise of a distinct “rhetorical agency” on the part of its players, an agency central to wit’s function in the performance of aristocratic identity. Additionally, this chapter develops a conception of wit sensitive to its performative qualities and critical engagement with rule-based systems such

as language—or music, a conception that increases its value as a critical tool for music historians.

*“In Voice, in Heart, in Hand Agree”<sup>28</sup>: Consort Music, Devotion, and ‘Liturgical Habitus’*” considers the role of consort music in the private devotional practices of amateur musicians. The period of this dissertation coincides, of course, with the immense—and often violent—cultural and political shifts of the Reformation, shifts that circumscribe the musical history of the English Renaissance. My chapter on devotion documents consort music’s stylistic and cultural bases in Catholic liturgical music and charts its adaptation to new Protestant devotional practices and religious values. Following recent scholarship by Bruce Holsinger and Katharine Breen that historicizes Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, I argue that consort music served as a preserve of a “liturgical” habitus, a musically and socially constituted “disposition” towards communal modes of worship. My claim is that the self-consciously “archaic” compositional elements of the style, such as the frequent use of cantus firmus forms and voice-leading gambits borrowed from liturgical polyphony, reveal the continued importance of *ritual* elements of Catholicism. I develop this claim both historically and critically, describing a little-known pedagogical literature of “plainsong” canons from the 1590s and tracing this material’s debt to forbidden Sarum chant and its influence on Jacobean consort music. By interrogating the continued ritual significance of cantus firmus polyphony during the Reformation, I challenge

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<sup>28</sup> George Wither, quoted in G.L. Finney, “Music: a Book of Knowledge in Renaissance England,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 6 (1959): 43.

previous scholarship on English music that has privileged stylistic continuity while ignoring (or denying) its social and cultural implications.

But though consort music served as a preserve of ritual elements of the “old” religion, the style also reflects the evolving devotional concerns of Protestant musicians including the changing relationship between worshipper and priest, the role of the Word, and the suitability of music—instrumental and otherwise—in acts of prayer. The consort anthem, a domestic devotional form for voices and viols, serves to focus my discussion. In particular, I look at a community of consort players in Cambridge who played music for voices and viols during the Commonwealth and Restoration as part of a larger devotional and philosophical project, one drawing on the complex confluence of humanism and inherited religious tradition. Much of this material, including pastor and musician Nathaniel Ingelo’s (1620/21-1683) romance *Bentivolio and Urania* (1660) and archival material on the musical circle of philosopher and translator John Worthington (1618-1671), has yet to be considered by musicology. Using these new sources I demonstrate the continued role of the viol consort in the domestic devotional life of the period and its complex transformation of a “liturgical” habitus to very different Protestant conceptions of the role of music in prayer.

*“Musique fitting for the place’: The (Homo)Eroticism of the Viol Consort”*

addresses consort music’s capacity to stage interactions of pleasure, intimacy, and power among its performers in the context of early modern conceptions of male homosociality and homoeroticism. My approach here is informed by—and

engages—several strains of recent scholarship on music and sexuality: accounts by Susan McClary, Laura Macy, and Todd Borgerding of the erotics of Renaissance vocal polyphony; Suzanne Cusick’s and Elisabeth Le Guin’s theoretical work on the conceptual congruency between “music” and “sex”; and the cultural historical accounts of musical realizations of same-sex desire in Bruce Holsinger’s *Music, the Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture* (2002). My chapter contributes to this body of scholarship by offering a fine-grained account of the musical eroticism of *instrumental* chamber music grounded in the specific cultural and historical context of the English Renaissance aristocracy. Specifically, I develop an account of how the conventions of voice leading in consort music were deployed by composers and understood by performers to excite and channel the erotic energy of social music making.

My account is framed by an efflorescence of scholarship from the 1980s and 90s by Alan Bray, Eve Sedgwick, Bruce Smith, and others who developed a nuanced theory of English Renaissance male homosociality and homoerotic desire, work sensitive to the radically different ways that sexuality was understood to inflect “identity” and inform social relationships. I read early modern literature, drama, and music criticism (some of which is new to music scholarship) to reveal a tradition that positioned the viol as a token of transgressive sexuality within the contested discourse of “passionate friendship” and the threat of “sodomy.” In particular, my chapter serves as one answer to Mario Digangi’s recent call for scholarship on Renaissance homoeroticism that “dislodge[es] the hegemonic status of sodomy as

an explanatory theory and imaginary referent for early modern homoeroticism.”<sup>29</sup> I analyze John Ward’s consort music to demonstrate the composer’s use of musical techniques inherited from the Italian madrigal to simulate erotic experience, techniques that Ward developed in his English madrigals. I then show how William White’s six-part consort music stages a complex combination of intimacy, pleasure and power that engages the varied registers of *imitation* and *equality*, figures that underlay early modern conceptions of male friendship.

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<sup>29</sup> M. Digangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 12.

## II

## Melancholy, Mourning, and Mimesis: The Viol Consort and English Sadness

*"And though the title doth promise teares, unfit guests in these joyfull times, yet no doubt pleasant are the teares which Musicke weepes..."*<sup>30</sup>

Thus does John Dowland preface the remarkable transformation of his lute song, "Flow my teares", into the seven "*lachrimae*" pavans for viol consort. Dowland's twofold gloss on this touchstone of English melancholy, both in the statement above and in the propagation of the song's emblematic *lachrimae* theme (figure 1) into the five-part instrumental polyphony of his *Lachrymae, or Seven Teares* (1604), offers unique insight into the cultural institution of English sadness. Specifically, Dowland's adaptation of a song for solo voice bewailing the solitary plight of its narrator to the communal musical configuration of a viol consort highlights two perplexing contradictions that haunt English melancholy; the undeniably social nature of a condition that proclaims its sufferers "exiled for ever," and the particular pleasures packaged in melancholy histrionics. These contradictions, as will be shown in this chapter, are implicated in one another, and can offer a key to the bewildering lexicon of English sadness, a lexicon that struggles to differentiate terms like "melancholy," "mourning," "grief," and "sadness" itself. But I begin with a reading of the first of Dowland's pavans, the "*Lachrimae antiqua*."

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<sup>30</sup> J. Dowland, *Lachrimae, or Seauen teares* (London, 1604), prefatory dedication.



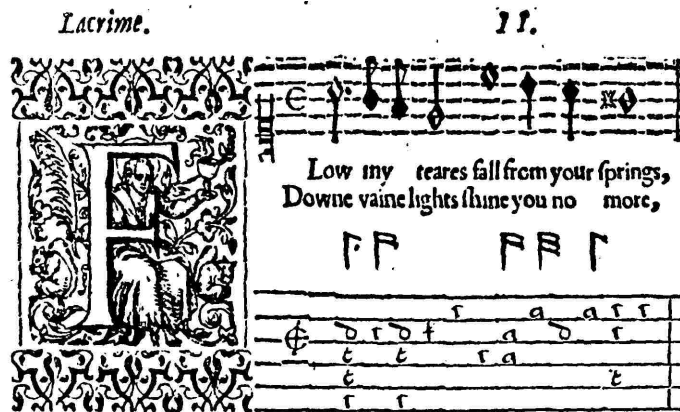


Figure 1. “*Lachrimae*” theme from “Flow my teares” in John Dowland’s *Second booke of songs or ayres* (1600).

Several years ago I gathered with a former teacher and several friends to play a concert of consort music in memory of my teacher’s husband. Thirty years earlier, nearly this same group of people had performed John Dowland’s complete *Lachrimae*, scored for five viols with optional lute accompaniment. In that earlier performance, my teacher’s husband had played the part that I played in our more recent one, and our rehearsal process was punctuated with moments of bittersweet memory. Unsurprisingly, considering the advertised emotional tenor of the collection, Dowland’s pavans were well suited to our process of musical remembrance and mourning. We sat in a circle, as the table book format of the *Lachrimae* invited, and played the first pavan of the set, the “*Lachrimae antiqua*,” choosing the slow tactus appropriate to a pavan, a tactus that might accompany dignified steps along the aisle of a church or match the calm breath of mourners in a respite from weeping. Our long, arching musical lines met predictably at cadences to form phrases whose trajectories we could sense from their beginnings, and so surrender ourselves to the harmony of our parts as the body surrenders to grief. The familiar *lachrimae* theme itself, with its blooming initial note and retreating

descent that gathers for just a moment before lurching up a keening minor sixth, provides a musical analogue to sobbing that is at once stylized and immediately, kinesthetically familiar. To pass this theme among the like-minded members of our consort was to weave a harmonious fabric in whose folds we could find a sensuous comfort.

Dowland's "*Lachrimae antiqua*" unfolds in three repeated strains of approximately sixteen semibreves each, a form in keeping with its generic identity as a pavan. The cantus is a nearly literal statement of the melody of "Flow my teares," and throughout the three strains Dowland reserves the most plangent dissonances for notes that correspond to painfully evocative words in the poem. The bracing cross relation between the cantus and altus, for example, that corresponds to the word "hell" in Dowland's poem, signals a fidelity to the text that likely testifies to widespread familiarity with the lute song by the time the *Lachrimae* collection was published several years later. Dowland's sensitivity to an unuttered but nevertheless powerfully present text is consistent with the viol consort tradition's close ties to texted polyphonic music like madrigals and liturgical settings. The evocative words of Dowland's well-known song haunt its instrumental guises in his "seven passionate pavans," a haunting that highlights the rhetorical nature of much of consort music's partwriting.

In the affective world of our rehearsals the ascending minor sixth of the *lachrimae* theme became coded as an affirmation of collective feeling, a rhetorical signal of the shared experience of wistfully mournful memory. Three of the five parts, including the prominent bassus and cantus voices, enact this musical gesture

within the first breve of the first strain, while the remaining altus and tenor parts provide a contrapuntal foundation (figure 2). In our interpretation, the sustained first note of the bassus gathered energy before leaping up the motivic minor sixth in immediate imitation of the cantus. This leap casts the dotted minim e in the altus as an aching 7-6 suspension whose resolution leads to the first “close” (cadence) of the strain on the fourth semibreve, a position that corresponds with the end of the first line of Dowland’s poetry (see below). This close offered our ensemble a satisfying, if brief, resolution to the anguished pleasure of the preceding dissonances and a convergence on a rhetorical and harmonic moment of respite that confirmed the communality of the experience of making mournful music together.

**1. Lachrimae Antiquae**

Figure 2. The opening counterpoint of John Dowland’s “*Lachrimae antiqua*” showing the ascending minor 6<sup>th</sup> in the cantus, quintus and bassus.<sup>31</sup>

Flow, my tears, fall from your springs!

Exiled for ever, let me mourn;

Where night's black bird her sad infamy sings,

<sup>31</sup> J. Dowland and Edgar Hunt, *Complete consort music: for viols or recorders* (London, New York: Schott, 1985), 2.

There let me live forlorn.

Down vain lights, shine you no more!

No nights are dark enough for those

That in despair their lost fortunes deplore.

Light doth but shame disclose.

Never may my woes be relieved,

Since pity is fled;

And tears and sighs and groans my weary days

Of all joys have deprived.

From the highest spire of contentment

My fortune is thrown;

And fear and grief and pain for my deserts

Are my hopes, since hope is gone.

Hark! you shadows that in darkness dwell,

Learn to condemn light

Happy, happy they that in hell

Feel not the world's despite.

**The text of “Flow my teares” from John Dowland’s *Second booke of songs or ayres* (1600)<sup>32</sup>**

Remembrance figured prominently in our musical gathering, and my analysis of Dowland’s pavan privileges those moments where the partwriting was incorporated into, and gave voice to, the collectivity of that experience. The second strain of the pavan features a rhythmic motive comprised of a crotchet followed by a minim whose staggered repetition in all parts creates an ascending d-minor arppreggio. In this passage, which begins midway through the third breve of the strain (figure 3), the altus and bassus articulate the motive together repeatedly starting on progressively higher chord tones while the cantus and tenor answer in rhythmic unison, their entrances imitating those of the cantus and bassus at the distance of one minim. The effect is a surge of energy that builds over the course of several breves as these two pairs of players repeatedly affirm and amplify each other’s utterances. The musical momentum builds into and through a brief episode of imitation on an elaborated version of the motive, still in d-minor, to arrive at the end of the strain on a close in E major. In our ensemble, the repeated back and forth of the crotchet-minim motive by pairs of players figured as assent, a repeated “yes” that yielded intensity and momentum. Imitation registered as agreement amplified by repetition and rhythmic unison. The coincidence of assent with ascent by allied pairs of players intensified and aestheticized the penumbra of our collective memory, blending and balancing our individual shades of mourning and recollection.

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<sup>32</sup> J. Dowland, *The second booke of songs or ayres, of 2. 4. and 5. parts* (London, 1600).



Figure 3. The second strain of Dowland's "*Lachrimae antiqua*" showing the imitation between pairs of voices of the crotchet-minim figure beginning in m.12.<sup>33</sup>

I begin with this autobiographical fragment in order to illustrate how the playing of chamber music creates among its players an emotional community, to borrow a formulation by Barbara Rosenwein. Rosenwein's recent work, particularly *Emotional Communities* (2006), seeks to develop a historiography that emphasizes "the social and relational nature of emotions," a project with important implications for scholars of chamber music.<sup>34</sup> One premise of this chapter is the existence of a meaningful affinity between the emotional communities of modern consort players and their historical counterparts. The mournful sensuousness evoked in our modern ensemble by Dowland's quintets is not alien to the feeling world that his music made accessible to amateur viol players when it was published in the first decade of the seventeenth century.

While false historical similitude always threatens the project of cultural history, feeling and imagination remain invaluable guides, a point captured by Bruce

<sup>33</sup> Dowland and Hunt, *Complete consort music: for viols or recorders*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> B.H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 25.

Holsinger in his notion of a “musicology of empathy.” “An empathetic musicology...will be honest and straightforward concerning our love and even desire for the music we study...as well as the ways in which these musical relations among ourselves are constructed simultaneously with the musical bodies that populate the past.”<sup>35</sup> Empathy, however, must always be tempered by self-awareness, lest the boundaries of the self are mistakenly identified as historically contingent—and alien—terrain. One form this self-awareness can take is thick description, which attends both to the discontinuities and points of overlap between our own and early modern topographies of feeling and discourse.

In that spirit, I segue from my post-millennial experience playing Dowland to its resonant early modern counterpart, and the contemporaneous preoccupation with the peculiar, paradoxical pleasure of musical sadness.

Soft harmony...full of mourning sweetenes maketh tender and perceth  
the mind, and sweetly imprinteth in it a passion full of great delite.<sup>36</sup>

Hoby’s 1561 translation of a passage of Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano*, like Dowland’s formulation above, captures the Elizabethan fascination with the intersection of sadness, music, and pleasure and raises the question, “what is sad music actually supposed to do?” Does it, as some early modern theories of musical affect suggest, offer an abstract representation of sadness in notes and gestures?

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<sup>35</sup> B. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 348.

<sup>36</sup> Baldassarre Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier [done into English by Thomas Hoby anno 1561]* (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & sons, Ltd., 1928), 61.

Does sad music function rhetorically, assuaging or instilling sadness where before there was none? Or does it allow for a heightened experience of the particular pleasures to be found in the feeling? Lamenting, Puttenham tells us in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589),

is altogether contrary to rejoising, every man saith so, and yet it is a peece of joy to be able to lament with ease, and freely to poure forth a mans inward sorrowes and the greefs wherewith his minde is surcharged.<sup>37</sup>

Sadness, in its many lexical guises, clings like cobwebs to the cultural artifacts of the English Renaissance. From the flowing tears of Dowland's airs to Spenser's *Faerie Queene* to Drayton's poetry to broadside elegies to treatises on melancholy and on the scripturally appropriate responses to death and grief, sadness left its mark as one of the era's most productive cultural forces. The two most visible forms of English Renaissance sadness, mourning and melancholy, existed in a complex counterpoint that persisted as late as the twentieth century and Freud's famous essay. As theorized in the Renaissance by Timothy Bright and Robert Burton and as represented by Shakespeare, Dowland, and Chapman, melancholy is a solitary affliction. Hamlet, like Dowland's narrator in "Flow my tears", is famously alone with his dark ruminations.

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<sup>37</sup> G. Puttenham, *The arte of English poesie* (London, 1589), 38.



Mourning, by contrast (and in spite of Dowland's use of the verb above), was understood as social, either occurring in ritual contexts like Masses for the dead (before their proscription by Protestant reform) or implicitly connecting a grieving individual to the communal structures that surrounded her, as in the models of consolatory letters published in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century formularies.<sup>38</sup> The collections of songs for voices and viols memorializing the death of young Prince Henry in 1612, for example, provided occasion for communal expressions and experiences of sadness. Unlike melancholy, which sequestered its sufferer inside a dark circle of alienation, mourning was understood as communal.

This dichotomy, that posits melancholy as an individual affliction and mourning as a social process, registers one of the major preoccupations of early modern English historiography: the idea that many of our modern conceptions of subjectivity and the relationship of the individual to society are traceable to the English Renaissance. Viol consort music produces these same tensions between individual experience and social practice. Consort music foregrounds the relationship between individual contrapuntal voice and full musical texture, between player and ensemble, and between the subject and society.

My argument in this chapter is that expressions of English sadness were shaped by the prevailing tensions between individual subjectivity, as it was coming to be understood, and communal emotional experience. The viol consort, whose very structure embodied this same tension, served as a productive site of a range of

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<sup>38</sup> G.W. Pigman, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). *The booke of common praier* of 1559 does include "The order for the buriall of the dead," which represents, as will be discussed later, a significant change from Catholic mourning and burial rituals.

manifestations of English sadness, from the individual, morally fraught territory of melancholic song to domestic and communal practices of musical mourning. I start with the consort song, a form with strong connections to choirboy drama, a genre that can be seen as an important context for the development of an ultimately far-reaching discourse of Elizabethan melancholy. A consort song by Richard Farrant, “Alas you salt sea gods”, exemplifies the ways that choirboy performance of music for voices and viols dramatized the morally fraught issues of sensuality and music that are central to the complex archeology of Elizabethan melancholy.<sup>39</sup> I then turn to one of the most visible moments of public grief in Renaissance England, the death of the son of King James I and heir to the English throne, Prince Henry, and the body of music for viols and voices that it inspired. John Ward’s madrigal mourning the death of the prince, circulated in manuscript among amateur viol players of the period, reveals the viol consort as a vehicle for communal performances of mourning and a response to Protestant injunctions against expressions of grief. Finally, Dowland’s consort music returns to complicate the melancholy/mourning dichotomy and intercede in the tensions between individual and ensemble musical experience endemic to the viol consort.

### **The Consort Song**

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<sup>39</sup> I explore the sensuality and intimacy of consort playing, particularly as it appears in the consort song repertory, in my chapter “‘Musique fitting for the place’: The (Homo)Eroticism of the Viol Consort.”

In 1604, the same year that Dowland published his *Lachrymae pavans*, Thomas Greaves published his *Songes of Sundrie Kindes*, a collection, divided in three parts, of ayres, songs with viol consort, and madrigals. Greaves titled the second section, comprised of songs for solo voice accompanied by viol consort, “Songs of Sadnes, for the Viols and Voice.”<sup>40</sup> These belong to a genre of music for voice and viol consort dubbed “consort songs” by Phillip Brett, a genre that emerged as the incidental music to performances of choirboy drama in the 1550s and 60s. Much of the ensemble music for viols that has survived from the second half of the sixteenth century is in the form of consort songs. Many works from the period that were once believed to be madrigals, such as William Byrd’s 1588 *Psalmes, Sonets, and Songes of Sadnes and Pietie*, have since been determined to have originated as consort songs with text subsequently added to the viol parts. The surviving consort song repertory from the 1550s and 60s, the pieces associated with choirboy drama, are preserved in retrospective manuscript collections such as that compiled by the Oxford don Robert Dow (GB-Och 984–8, the so-called “Dow Partbooks”) and attests to the popularity of the form even before Byrd took it up in the 1570s and 80s.<sup>41</sup>

Young members of the children’s companies, such as those of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London and the Children of the Chapel Royal, performed consort songs in the private theaters of the Court and nobility. Duke Philip Julius of Stettin-Pomerania describes children’s theater under Elizabeth in a surviving excerpt of his diary from his tour of England in 1602.

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<sup>40</sup> See my chapter “‘In Voice, in Heart, in Hand Agree’: Consort Music, Devotion, and ‘Liturgical Habitus’” for a detailed discussion of the first of Greaves’ “Songs of sadness” in the context of my discussion of consort music as devotional practice.

<sup>41</sup> Philip Brett, *Consort songs*, vol. 22, *Musica Britannica* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1967).

The origin of this Children's Comcediam is this: the Queen keeps a number of young boys who have to apply themselves zealously to the art of singing and to learn all the various musical instruments, and to pursue their studies at the same time. These boys have special preceptores in all the different arts, especially very good musicos. And in order that they may acquire courteous manners, they are required to act a play once a week, for which purpose the Queen has erected for them a special theatrum with an abundance of costly garments...[T]here are always a good many people present, many respectable women as well, because useful argumenta, and many good doctrines, as we were told, are brought forward there.<sup>42</sup>

The connection between the consort song and the children's companies relates to the fact that the viol became an important part of chorister pedagogy as early as the 1550s. Choir schools, such as those of the Cathedrals at Exeter, Westminster, Lincoln, and York trained choristers to play the viol and furnished the children's companies, some of which were directed by the masters of choristers themselves, with boy actors, singers, and musicians.<sup>43</sup> J.E. Flynn notes that though choristers may have practiced liturgical music on viols as part of their religious

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<sup>42</sup> G. Von Bulow, "Diary of the Journey of Philip Julius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, Through England in the Year 1602," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1892): 27-9.

<sup>43</sup> I. Woodfield, *The early history of the viol* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), xii, 266-8; I. Payne, *The provision and practice of sacred music at Cambridge colleges and selected cathedrals, c. 1547-c. 1646 : a comparative study of the archival evidence* (New York: Garland Pub., 1993).

musical training, the viol was “not used during liturgies, but rather for ‘secular’ entertainment.”<sup>44</sup> She documents sixteenth-century plays and entertainments performed by choristers that contain music-related stage directions or other references to music.<sup>45</sup> Of her thirty two items, which range from Anne Boleyn’s 1533 coronation celebration through John Jeffere’s 1563 *The Bugbears* and include John Redford’s popular 1547 production *Wit and Science*, eight make explicit reference to the viol and several more make reference to music for unspecified instruments that could easily have been performed using viols. Additionally, Linda Austern, whose study focuses on the next generation of children’s drama, notes that Marston’s *Jacke Drum’s Entertainment* and Chapman’s *Sir Gyles Goose-Capke* each include directions for solo song accompanied by viol consort.<sup>46</sup>

The consort song of the late sixteenth century, as I’ll show, was an important site of the production and performance of Elizabethan melancholy. The stylistic “traces” of this tradition were to become incorporated into the compositional language of consort music, as it took on new roles as an agent of sadness in later decades. But first it is necessary to explore the particularities of the consort song’s implication in the contemporaneous discourse of Elizabethan melancholy.

### **Elizabethan Melancholy and *The Paradise of Daynty Devices***

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<sup>44</sup> J.E. Flynn, “A reconsideration of the Mulliner Book (British Library Add. MS 30513): Music education in sixteenth-century England” (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1993).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 9. See also P. Happe, *Song in Morality Plays and Interludes* (Lancaster: Medieval English Theatre, 1991).

<sup>46</sup> L.P. Austern, *Music in English Children’s Drama of the Later Renaissance* (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1992).

*The Paradise of Daynty Devices*, a poetry miscellany published in 1576, attested to the popularity of the consort song and underscored the genre's close association with Elizabethan melancholy. Publisher Henry Disle advertised the contents as "*aptly made to be set to any song in 5 partes, or song to instrument(s)*"—a reference to the then-fashionable consort song repertory.<sup>47</sup> At least seven of the surviving consort songs from the period are settings of poetry from the collection.<sup>48</sup> The *Paradise*, compiled by Richard Edwards, master of the Children of the Chapel Royal during the 1560s, was the most popular of the many miscellanies, or poetry anthologies, published during Elizabeth's reign.<sup>49</sup> It went through ten editions between 1576 and 1606, and reflects, with the moralizing character of its poetry, the pedagogical nature of its compilation. Titles like "Oppressed with sorrow he wishest death" and "Our pleasures are but vanities" indicate the collection's prevailing themes: "the fickleness of fortune, the vanity of pleasures, laments for slander, feigned friends, [and] sufferings in love."<sup>50</sup> These motifs position the *Paradise* firmly within a tradition of Elizabethan melancholy that coordinates morality, sensuality, and music and that aligns with the thematic content of the morality plays and their repertory of consort songs. In order to map some of the contours of this tradition, I will read the poetry of Edward's collection alongside Timothy Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) and Thomas Morley's *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597).

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<sup>47</sup> R. Edwards, *The paradyse of daynty devises* (London, 1576).

<sup>48</sup> See Brett, *Consort songs*, 22:.

<sup>49</sup> Such as, for example, Tottle's *Miscellany* (1557) or *A Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1566). *The Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576-1606)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), viii.

<sup>50</sup> E. Pomeroy, *The Elizabethan Miscellanies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 11.

The poetry in the *Paradise* that traffics in melancholic imagery ranges from complaints of an unspecified but intense misery to complaints of frustrated lovers to pious denouncements of worldly vanity to poems extolling the power of music to ameliorate sadness. These poems all reference, in some combination, the symptoms of the melancholic as enumerated by Bright in his *Treatise* as

solitarines, morning, weeping, &...melancholic laughter, sighing,  
sobbing, lamentation, countenance demisee, and hanging downe,  
blushing and bashfull, of pace slow, silent, negligent, refusing the light  
and frequency of men, delighted more in solitarines and obscurity.<sup>51</sup>

Typically, as in “Finding worldly ioyes but vanities, he wisheth death”, the *Paradise*’s melancholic poetry takes the form of a first person lament in alliterative rhyming couplets that lists (sometimes in great length) the melancholic symptoms of the narrator.

Forlorne in filthy froward fate, wherein a thousand cares I finde:  
By whom I do lament my state, annoyde with fond afflicted minde.  
A wretch in woe, and dare not crye,  
I liue, and yet I wishe to die.  
...  
A wailynge wight I walke alone, in desert dennes there to complayne:

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<sup>51</sup> T. Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London, 1586), 123-4.

Among the sauage sort to moue, I flee my frendes where they  
remayne.

Here, the author's self-pitying verbosity invites a reading that acknowledges his claim to elevated poetic status through the tropes of "inspired" melancholy. This tradition, well documented by modern scholarship, has its origins in the pseudo-Aristotelian concept of melancholy as a mark of poetic genius and moral vigilance as articulated in *Problemata* XXX.<sup>52</sup> This Classical text, which posits a connection between "eminen[ce] in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts" and an excess of black bile, was given a new life in the Renaissance occult philosophy of Ficino, Agrippa, Dürer, and others and seems to have reached England as part of the influx of Italian humanist thought during the sixteenth century.<sup>53</sup> The tradition of inspired melancholy existed alongside, and often in tandem with, Galenic conceptions such as Bright's and later Robert Burton's of melancholy as a humoral pathology. Scholars differ on the extent to which early modern English culture, especially the music of Dowland, was influenced by occult philosophy.<sup>54</sup> It is clear, however, that melancholy was seen to confer a certain artistic credibility to poets, artists, and musicians, at least until such a move came to be mocked by the first decades of the

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<sup>52</sup> L. Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951); P. Gouk, "Music, Melancholy, and Medical Spirits in Early Modern Thought," in *Music as Medicine: The History of Music Therapy since Antiquity*, ed. P. Horden (Ashgate, 2000); G.B. Harrison, "On Elizabethan Melancholy," in *Melancholike Humours*, ed. G.B. Harrison (London: The Scholartis Press, 1929); N.J. Hurvitz, "A flood of tears: Melancholy as style in English music and poetry circa 1600" (University of British Columbia, 1996); R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, and F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (New York, 1964); A. Rooley, "New light on John Dowland's songs of darkness," *Early Music* 11 (1983): 6-21.

<sup>53</sup> J. Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle Vol. II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 953a10-14.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Robin Headlam Wells' response to Anthony Rooley in R.H. Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).



seventeenth century (see, for example, the frontispiece of Burton's *Anatomy* discussed below).

The melancholic self-representation of many of the poets anthologized in the *Paradyse* is significant here because it employs a rhetoric of solitariness in which the melancholic both shuns and feels shunned by the world, "A wailynge wight I walke alone...I flee my frendes where they remayne." This tendency to withdraw from his social surroundings is one of several ways in which the melancholic is positioned as an "other" to the morally upright, humble, loyal, pious, socially engaged subject by both Bright's *Treatise* and the poetry of the *Paradise*. Juliana Schiesari argues that melancholy is one of the persistent features of the last several hundred years of Western culture and that "the historical boundaries of a great age of melancholia...are coterminous with the historic rise and demise of 'the subject' as the organizing principle of knowledge and power."<sup>55</sup> Bright describes how melancholy distorts the perception of reality, impairs memory, and alienates the sufferer from his social world, all of which conspire to make the enactment of modern subjectivity virtually impossible.

[The melancholy humor] counterfetteth terrible obiects to the fantasie, and polluting both the substance, and spirits of the brayne, causeth it without externall occasion, to forge monstrous fictions, and terrible to the conceite...Neither only is common sense, and fantasie thus overtaken with delusion, but memory also receiveth a wound

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<sup>55</sup> J. Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 2.

therewith: which disableth it both to keepe in memory, and to record those thinges, whereof it tooke some custody before this passion, and after, therewith are defaced.<sup>56</sup>

And yet the figure of the melancholic poet has historically been one of the most potent exemplars of the rise of “the subject” in Elizabethan culture. Perhaps this is because melancholy, as it is represented in late-sixteenth sources, challenges those very fundamentals of selfhood: perception, memory, and social engagement (even while it is employed as a claim to poetic eminence). Melancholic poetry dramatizes the struggle to define the self against the condition’s corrosive effects that render “*common sense*, and fantasie thus overtaken with delusion.” As the narrator of another of the *Paradise*’s melancholic poems complains:

The world I graspe, yet hold I nought at all,  
At libertie I seeme, in prison pent:  
I tast the sweete, more sower then bitter gall,  
My ship seemes sounde, and yet her ribbes be rent.<sup>57</sup>

Melancholy is figured here as a state of contradiction, one that impairs agency (“graspe/hold I nought”), the incorporation of sensory experience (“sweete/sower”), and self-definition (“libertie/prison,” and “sounde/rent”).

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<sup>56</sup> Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie*, 104.

<sup>57</sup> From “Findyng no relief, he complayneth thus” by R. Hill in Edwards, *The paradise of daynty devises*.

Contradiction itself is a key trope of Elizabethan melancholy, a condition whose performance seems to have been designed to isolate the pleasures particular to misery. If the reading—and writing—of poetry were enough to offer a taste of this pleasurable contradiction, than the performance of this poetry as a strand of song interwoven with the plangent counterpoint of a viol consort would have been a banquet. As Burton would note several decades later, “Many men are melancholy by hearing musicke, but it is a pleasant melancholy that it causeth.”<sup>58</sup> Morley’s prescription for the composition of music expressing a “a lamentable passion” include the use of

Flat thirdes and flat sixes, which of their nature are sweet [and] may  
fitlie expresse the passions of grieffe, weeping, sighes, sorrowes,  
sobbes, and such like.<sup>59</sup>

“Sweet” is a word particularly evocative of pleasure in this context, and its use along with a catalogue of nouns that so closely parallels Bright’s description of melancholy (“sighing, sobbing, lamentation, countenance demisee, and hanging downe”) is telling.

But the pleasures of melancholic poetry, heightened by its alliance with music, did not escape the anxious anhedonia of the period, a fact that helps explain the formulaic denouncement of worldly pleasures that forms an essential part of the convention. In a Protestant culture always suspicious of the capacity of pleasure to

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<sup>58</sup> R. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London, 1621), 375.

<sup>59</sup> T. Morley, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (London, 1597), 177.

distract from righteous behavior, a discourse that posits that “Our pleasures are but vanities”—to quote the title of the first poem of the *Paradise*—would have served an important rhetorical and pedagogical function. This tension, between the contradictory pleasures of melancholic song and its role on the moralizing stage of choirboy drama, is particularly evident in Richard Farrant’s consort song “Ah, alas you salt sea gods”.

### **Richard Farrant’s “Ah, alas you salt sea gods”**

Anthony Rooley argues that by the middle of the last decade of the sixteenth century the “fashionable cult” of Elizabethan melancholy had become something of a cliché. “After about 1594 a play would hardly be complete without a caricature of melancholy, in one or another manifestation: the lover, the scholar, the madman, the musician or the poet.”<sup>60</sup> Shakespeare mocked melancholic choirboy drama in the “Pyramus and Thisbe” episode of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The alliterative and histrionic verse of Shakespeare’s play within a play would have readily conjured the scores of choirboy dramas from the previous generation such as *Appius and Virginia* (Richard Bower), *Palaemon and Arcite* (Richard Edwards), *Panthea and Abradatas* (Richard Farrant), and *Sapho and Phao* (John Lyly). Shakespeare chose his parodic material presciently: just a few decades after the publication of the first quarto of

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<sup>60</sup> Rooley, “New light on John Dowland’s songs of darkness,” 12.

*Midsummer* Burton cited the story of Pyramus and Thisbe in his *Anatomy* as an example of melancholy induced by unrequited love.<sup>61</sup>

Pyramus' grief-stricken speech over the body of Thisbe would have been sung to the accompaniment of viols had the episode been anything but a parody. G. E. P. Arkwright argues that the morality plays' principle contribution to Tudor drama was the use of music to heighten the effects of the "principal tragic climaxes."<sup>62</sup> The chorister plays' didactic representation of "moral conduct conceived allegorically in terms of virtues and vices" required some tragedy, and the consort song repertory seems to have been employed principally to dramatize moments of pathos.<sup>63</sup> As Arkwright reports, "this kind of music consists almost entirely of invocations to Death; laments for friends and lovers; songs of despair or falsely-accused heroines; and such like: but particularly death-songs."<sup>64</sup> "Ah, alas you salt sea gods" is an example of the latter, and is one of Richard Farrant's only surviving songs, likely performed as part of his lost play *Panthea and Abradatas*.

"Ah, alas" exemplifies the enshrouding of grief with pleasure central to viol consort music's melancholic pedigree. The song begins with a four measure instrumental introduction in G minor followed by a syllabic setting of Farrant's lamenting text.

Ah, alas, you salt sea gods!

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<sup>61</sup> Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, MEMB. 4. Prognosticks of Loue-melancholy.

<sup>62</sup> G.E.P. Arkwright, "Elizabethan Choirboy Plays and Their Music," *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 40th Sess, (1914): 127.

<sup>63</sup> H. Craig, "Morality Plays and Elizabethan Drama," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1950): 70.

<sup>64</sup> Arkwright, "Elizabethan Choirboy Plays and Their Music," 127.

Bow down your ears divine.  
 Lend ladies here warm water springs  
 To moist their crystal eyne,  
 That they may weep and wail  
 And wring their hands with me  
 For death of lord and husband mine  
 (Alas, lo, this is he!)

You gods that guide the ghosts  
 And souls of them that fled,  
 send sobs, send sighs, send grievous groans  
 And strike poor Panthea dead.  
 Abradad, ah, alas poor Abradad!  
 Mine sprite with thine shall lie.  
 Come death, alas, O death most sweet,  
 For now I crave to die.<sup>65</sup>

As is common in consort songs of this period, the vocal part behaves like a texted cantus, exhibiting similar phrase lengths and rhythmic activity and sharing thematic material with the other voices. There is little text painting, though some words, such as “weep” (in measure 15 of Brett’s edition), set as an f-natural cross relation against a D-major chord in the viols, are given special musical emphasis.

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<sup>65</sup> Brett, *Consort songs*, 22:15.

The piece achieves a dramatic climax during its final section, set up by a unique moment of homophony in the viols in measure 35 (figure 4). After repeating the name of her dead husband three times on a fragment of a D-major arpeggio, Panthea surges longingly up to a high e on the phrase “my sp[i]rite with thine shall lie” and then calls forth her own death in a vocal descent that lands the word “sweet” on a dulcet f#, the major third of the D-major chord on which the phrase cadences and the same pitch that had repeatedly borne the strong last syllable of her husband’s name (figure 4, mm. 36-42). The last phrase, “for now I crave to die,” returns us to G minor before repeating the utterance “I die” four times over the course of a three-measure codetta in G major.

35  
dead. A - bra-dad, A - bra - dad, ah, ah, a - las poor A-bra-dad! My spritewith thine shall  
Homophony in the viols  
Tr: d, Wi: d  
Wi: o, My2, Tr, Wi, TCD: o  
Tr: o, Wi: o  
Tr: Wi: o

40  
lie. Come, death, a - las, O death most sweet, For now, for now, for  
Wi: d  
Tr: d  
Tr: d  
Tr: o

46  
now I crave to die, to die, to die, to die, to die.  
Tr, TCD: d  
Tr: TCD: o

Figure 4. . “Ah, alas you salt sea gods” by Richard Farrant, mm. 35-47<sup>66</sup>

From the first vocal entrance on a b natural (figure 5), “Ah, alas, you salt sea gods” is characterized by a strange modal ambivalence, a fluctuation between the inflections of “sharpe” and “flatt.” The b natural is the “sharpe” third, the most

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



unsettling pitch to the tonic g-minor, a key whose association with tragic laments in English music would continue through Purcell's setting of Dido's lament.<sup>67</sup> Though consort music of this period often uses "sharpe" thirds in important closes, it is rare to find this sort of mode mixture so early in a composition. Nor is the first appearance of b natural, setting the opening exclamation of the first line of the song, implicated in the extremely brief visit to C minor that follows it, and that seems rather like a response to it than its cause. Rather, I read Farrant's use of the major third in the vocal entrance as an instance of the conflation of pleasure and sadness alluded to above by Dowland, Puttenham, and Burton. The major third is a uniquely pleasurable interval to play or sing in consort music. As Francis North would say several decades later in his *Philosophicall essay of musick* (1676), "a third sharp [a major third] is a Chord [interval] so gratefull that it is allowed in the close to fill the sound."<sup>68</sup> Musicians of the day would have likely tuned this interval pure to the pitches in the other parts. Tuned this way, and voiced highest in the ensemble as it is here, a b natural rings sweetly in a consort of viols, an effect that is only heightened in its performance by a solo voice. This momentary eruption of pleasurable indulgence in Panthea's lament for her dead husband is given further life during the final phrases of the song, when her longing for Abradatas and sweet death veer towards a musical erotic (a dynamic that I explore in detail in my final chapter).<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> I use the terminology of later eras of music theory, such as "tonic" and "key" advisedly, here. My analytical project is as anachronistic as the theoretical concepts I (somewhat hesitantly) employ to describe it. I have decided, though, that casting this analysis in seventeenth-century theoretical vocabulary offers more obfuscation than its small payoff of verisimilitude is worth.

<sup>68</sup> F. North, *A Philosophical Essay of Musick* (London, 1676), 30.

<sup>69</sup> For another account of "the boy actor as vocal seductress," see Linda Phyllis Austern, "'No women are indeed': the boy actor as vocal seductress in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century

There is the passionate musical ascent setting the phrase “My sp[i]rite with thine shall lie” and its answer, a surrounding of the word death with the words “come” and “sweet” (figure 5, mm. 39-42). This is most acute in the codetta, when the act which Panthea craves, already marked as “sweet” in the previous phrase, is set to major thirds in a way that more strongly suggests the satisfied closure of the “petit morte”—the “little death”—than the anguished death of a tragic heroine (figure 4, mm. 45-47).

Figure 5. First vocal entrance on b-natural in “Ah, alas you salt sea gods” by Richard Farrant.

This conflation of mourning and longing, sadness and desire, would have been sung by a male chorister still in his teens, perhaps before Queen Elizabeth as part of one of Richard Farrant’s annual productions during the late 1560s or 70s while he was the master of the choristers of the Chapel Royal and St George’s Chapel, Windsor.<sup>70</sup> For many audience members, who included not only the monarch but also courtiers and their retinue, performances of morality plays by

English drama,” in *Embodied Voices: Representing female vocality in western culture*, ed. Leslie C Dunn and Nancy A Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 83-102.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Le Huray and John Morehen, “Farrant, Richard,” *Grove Music Online* (n.d.), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09332>.

choristers would have been their primary contact with the viol.<sup>71</sup> It seems likely, as choirboy drama became a staple of Court entertainments during the 1560s and later, that songs of “sobs, sighs, and grievous groans” issuing sweetly from the mouths of choirboys would have conjured the sound of their accompanying viol consort. This association would have been particularly strong for the choristers themselves, many of who took their places in the musical establishments of Court and noble households as they grew up.

But there is a more subtle connection between discourses of English melancholy of the period and songs like “Ah, alas, you salt sea gods”, a connection rooted in contemporary understandings of melancholy as a negative consequence of musically induced desire. The connections between love and music in sixteenth-century England have been well documented by scholars like John Hollander and Linda Austern.<sup>72</sup> Thomas Morley famously quoted Plato’s definition of music as “a science of love matters occupied in harmonie and rhythmos.”<sup>73</sup> Austern noticed that Nicholas Breton (author of the poetry collection *Melancholike Humours* (1600) described love as “a ravishment of the Soule,” while Robert Burton used the identical phrase to describe music in his 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy*.<sup>74</sup> Principal among the theoretical links between love and music was the idea that both had a

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<sup>71</sup> Woodfield notes that “the choirboy viol-playing tradition was also probably the single most influential factor in the spread of the instrument throughout English society.” Woodfield, *The early history of the viol*, 227.

<sup>72</sup> J. Hollander, *The untuning of the sky: ideas of music in English poetry, 1500-1700* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), ix, 467; L.P. Austern, “Love, death and ideas of music in the English Renaissance,” in *Love and death in the Renaissance* (Dovehouse, 1991), 17-36.

<sup>73</sup> Morley, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music*, Annotations.

<sup>74</sup> Austern, “Love, death and ideas of music in the English Renaissance,” 20.

similar power to purify or to corrupt, to model divine love or celestial harmony or to lead sensually astray to “lascivious and soul-hazarding concupisence.”<sup>75</sup>

Melancholy was understood to be one of the dangerous shoals guarding the straits between ennobling and perilous love, and it is the negotiation of these dangerous waters that I would argue constituted the pedagogical purpose of the chorister plays. The frontispiece of Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* features an engraving of a young man with folded hands and a broad-brimmed hat hiding his eyes (see figure 6). This “Inamorato” is surrounded by darkness and at his feet rests a lute and scattered pieces of music. The image is captioned by Burton with a poem.

Inamorato with folded hand;  
Down hangs his head, terse and polite,  
Some dittie sure he doth indite.  
His lute and books around him lie,  
As symptoms of his vanity.

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<sup>75</sup> [Cartari,] *The Fountain of Ancient Fiction*, sig. 0<sup>v</sup>, quoted in *Ibid.*, 29.



Figure 6. “Inamorato” from the frontispiece of Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).

This character, whom Anthony Rooley calls the “Renaissance emblem” of melancholy, is young, vain, and troubled by love.<sup>76</sup> He is precisely the type that moralists like William Prynne would condemn for his “lascivious, amorous, effeminate, voluptuous Musicke” and epitomizes, in all likelihood, all that the morality plays were supposed to train out of their choristers.<sup>77</sup> Certainly Panthea’s passionately grief-stricken song, sung on stage by one prepubescent boy to another, would have excited moralist concern not just for the choristers themselves but for those on the other side of the footlights as well. As Stephen Greenblatt has observed about the performance of Latin plays by sixteenth-century schoolboys, there was

<sup>76</sup> Rooley, “New light on John Dowland’s songs of darkness,” 11.

<sup>77</sup> Austern, “Love, death and ideas of music in the English Renaissance,” 19.

considerable anxiety surrounding the sexuality of young boys.<sup>78</sup> Cambridge scholar John Rainolds compared the kiss of a beautiful boy to that of “certain spiders”: “if they do but touch men only with their mouth, they put them to wonderful pain and make them mad.”<sup>79</sup> While it is uncertain whether Farrant’s lost play would have featured any kissing, it did feature passionate song, a medium of sensuality recognized as possessing a comparably dangerous power. Choristers, it is worth remembering, were often “taken up”—kidnapped from their homes to be sent to train as singers, and later actors, in London. Separated from their families, and vulnerable to the mistreatments of their older peers and masters, it is little surprise that traces of a sublimated homoeroticism can be detected in the music of chorister drama and its likely reception.<sup>80</sup> This tension, dramatized by boys raising their beautiful voices to sing tragic songs of lost love to other boys amid the intertwined polyphony of a viol consort, helped give shape to a conception of melancholy as the tragic result of unchecked sensuality.

The image of a solo voice rising in a despairing wail above the strains of a viol consort fits comfortably with an Elizabethan conception of melancholy as a solitary affect, as an experience of individual subjectivity. But a viol consort is a social entity. The instrumentalists accompanying the solo singer in a melancholic consort song are accessories to that affect, and relate to it both as individuals but also, and perhaps primarily, as members of a social and musical collective. Taken out of

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<sup>78</sup> S. Greenblatt, *Will in the world: how Shakespeare became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004), 27.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> See E. Pittenger, “‘To Serve the Queere’: Nicholas Udall, Master of Revels,” in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. J. Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994).

context, any one voice of a viol consort makes little sense. This is why individual subjectivity, despite its current predominance in the cultural study of art music, is a less helpful category than it might appear for studying the viol consort and, I think, chamber music generally.

### **Grief, Mourning, and Protestant Injunction**

I will now address the communal nature of “sad” consort music by reading an example of the large body of elegiac music for voices and viols commemorating the death of Prince Henry in the context of the changing conceptions of mourning and mourning practices in Reformation England. Recent research by scholars Tobias Doring and Katharine Goodland examines the ways that Protestant injunctions against ritual practices of mourning created “the need for cultural substitutes by which memories of the dead would find an appropriate place.”<sup>81</sup> The social configuration of the viol consort was, I argue, just such a place; where the early modern conception of mourning as both a communal and ritual practice was manifest in the sounds and gestures of the ensemble. When conceived of in these terms, the viol consort becomes what Barbara Rosenwein has dubbed an “emotional community.” “Emotional communities,” she writes, “are groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value-or devalue-the same

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<sup>81</sup> T. Doring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture*, 2006, 17; K. Goodland, *Female Mourning and tragedy in medieval and renaissance English drama: from the raising of Lazarus to King Lear* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2005).

or related emotions.”<sup>82</sup> Among recent writing on the history of emotion, this concept is particularly useful to my project because it focuses on the social nature of emotional experience. A consort comprised of Elizabethan aristocrats was an emotional community par excellence, nested in the more inclusive emotional communities of contemporary amateur musicians and a nobility struggling to adapt to new and changing protocols of grief and mourning.

Unlike melancholy, in which the sufferer is “delighted more in solitarines and obscurity,” grief has been widely theorized as an inherently social, an emotion that connects its sufferer to others in communal practices of mourning. Death is a disruption of the social order, and “the mourner is a public figure who manifests his- or her-affliction by means of public motions and publicly acknowledged gestures.”<sup>83</sup> In early modern England, grief needed to be shared, lest it suffocate the heart. As Macbeth told grief-stricken McDuff, “Give sorrow words: The grief that does not speak /Whispers the o’er fraught heart and bids it break.”<sup>84</sup> Pre-Reformation death and mourning rites, in their combination of ethnic and Catholic influences, emphasized the communal. Katharine Goodland has chronicled the representations of female mourning in pre-Reformation drama and notes the ubiquity of images of collective grief. “Female weepers in groups of three, like the three mourning Marys of medieval drama, adorned funeral monuments and haunted commemorative portraits.”<sup>85</sup> The pomp and splendor of the heraldic funeral, gradually replaced

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<sup>82</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, 2.

<sup>83</sup> Doring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture*, 4.

<sup>84</sup> Cited in B.G. Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in literary treatments of melancholy in Renaissance England* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), 14.

<sup>85</sup> Goodland, *Female Mourning and tragedy in medieval and renaissance English drama: from the raising of Lazarus to King Lear*, 5.



during the seventeenth century by night burials, emphasized the public spectacle of mourning.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, the funerary elegy that blossomed in the hands of Spenser, Milton, and Drayton has been theorized as a form of collective mourning. “Like ritual,” says Brady, “elegies are sociable, uniting communities disrupted by death, promoting civic values or negotiating loyalties and allegiances within smaller sodalities.”<sup>87</sup> As I’ll show, the viol consort served as another site for ritual performances of communal grief—performances that solidified the emotional community of the players through the socially and musically interactive dynamics of making music.

Recent scholarship has illuminated the dramatic change that took place in the solemn rites of grief and mourning over the course of the Reformation.<sup>88</sup> Chief among the changes instituted by Protestant reformers was the abolition of the doctrine of Purgatory in Article XXII of the 39 Articles of 1553.

The Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, worshipping and adoration as well of Images as of Relics, and also Invocation of Saints,

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<sup>86</sup> C. Gittings, *Death, Burial, and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1988), 14.

<sup>87</sup> A. Brady, *English Funerary Elegy in the Seventeenth Century: Laws in Mourning* (Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

<sup>88</sup> Doring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture*; Brady, *English Funerary Elegy in the Seventeenth Century: Laws in Mourning*; Goodland, *Female Mourning and tragedy in medieval and renaissance English drama: from the raising of Lazarus to King Lear*; Pigman, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy*; S. Mullaney, “Mourning and Misogyny: Hamlet, The Revenger’s Tragedy, and the Final Progress of Elizabeth I, 1600-1607,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (1994): 139-162; Elizabeth Harris Sagaser, “Shakespeare’s Sweet Leaves: Mourning, Pleasure, and the Triumph of Thought in the Renaissance Love Lyric,” *ELH* 61, no. 1 (1994): 1-26; A. Boesky, “The Maternal Shape of Mourning: A Reconsideration of ‘Lycidas’,” *Modern Philology* 95, no. 4 (1998): 463-483.

is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture; but rather repugnant to the word of God.

According to the doctrine of Purgatory, prayers and masses said for the dead are efficacious in helping those souls achieve salvation. Mourning was thus sanctioned by the authority of the church and gave mourners “a sense of agency and continuing connection with their loved ones.”<sup>89</sup> It also, as Stephen Greenblatt has pointed out, served to keep mourning practices within reach of church management.<sup>90</sup> The masses, prayers, almsgiving, and other activities around which communal practices of mourning had been organized suddenly fell under the shadow of Protestant suspicion. As Doring tells us, “The crucial difference to post-Reformation practices...lies in the fact that all such activities of engaging with the fate of the dead were no longer permissible for Protestant mourners...Thus, the process of reforming worship and religious doctrine crucially affected social performances of mourning, as Protestant theology formulated distinctly different ideas about heaven and the afterlife.”<sup>91</sup> These different ideas, as Pigman has shown, severely curtailed the social and religious propriety of grief and held, in their more extreme manifestations, that grief for the dead constituted a “weakness, inadequate self-control, and impiety.”<sup>92</sup> Additionally, the widespread defacement of images of the Virgin Mary and her symbolic transformation into the “Whore of Babylon” by Protestant reformers

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<sup>89</sup> Goodland, *Female Mourning and tragedy in medieval and renaissance English drama: from the raising of Lazarus to King Lear*, 3.

<sup>90</sup> S. Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 102.

<sup>91</sup> Doring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture*, 9.

<sup>92</sup> Pigman, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy*, 2.

rendered inaccessible one of the most revered archetypes of mourning, the *Pietà*, the grieving mother cradling the body of her son.<sup>93</sup>

The abolition of the doctrine of Purgatory and the removal of the body, in the 1552 emendation of the burial rite, from the interior of the church to the gate of the burial ground outside, had the effect of constraining socially and religiously sanctioned mourning rituals.<sup>94</sup> Coupled with these institutional changes, the admonitions against expressions of grief by Protestant preachers and in formularies and books on the proper comportment of the dying and grieving, such as Thomas Beacon's *The Sick Mans Salve* (1560), complicated the performance of the individually and socially necessary processes of mourning. Beacon's character Epaphroditus responds sanctimoniously to the narrator's suggestion that he might grieve to contemplate his own death with a declaration that typified the Protestant view.

I thinke that at the burials of the faithful there should rather be ioy and gladnesse, then mourning and sadnesse, rather pleasant songes of thankesgiving, then lamentable and dolefull Diriges. Let the infidels mourne for their dead: the Christians ought to reioyce when any of the faithfull bee called from this vale of miserie unto the glorious kingdom of God.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Goodland, *Female Mourning and tragedy in medieval and renaissance English drama: from the raising of Lazarus to King Lear*, 3.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Beacon, 1585, 67f, quoted in Doring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture*, 31.

Recent scholarship has looked to the frequent representations of grief and mourning in Tudor drama and the efflorescence of elegiac poetry in Tudor and Stuart England as responses to prohibitions against expressions of grief as well as nostalgia for the ritual elements of pre-Reformation practices. Both drama and poetry are sites of performance, a domain deeply connected to ritual, as theorized by Victor Turner and later Richard Schechner. As Doring points out with regard to the politically and culturally sensitive issues that mourning presented during the period, “performance is such a useful strategy because it is always deniable. It proceeds with a calculated consciousness of its own contingent nature.”<sup>96</sup> Amateur chamber music shares both these ritual and contingent elements. It foregrounds interaction and exchange in the generation of social meanings and brings to life the complex interplay between text and act. I propose that Elizabethan attitudes about the propriety of grief and the ritual dimensions of mourning practices deeply informed, and can perhaps help explain, the wealth of sad music for voices and viols. To explore the viol consort as an emotional community of mourning I will now turn to one of the most significant occasions of public grief in early modern England, the death of Henry, Prince of Wales, in 1612.

### **The “untimely death of Prince Henry”**

The Prince’s death from fever at age eighteen was a keenly felt national tragedy that resulted in a flood of literary and musical elegies. George Chapman,

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 20.

Thomas Campion, George Herbert, and many others published elegies for the Prince, and numerous broadside elegies celebrated Henry's youthful vigor and lamented Britain's loss.<sup>97</sup> In addition, composers John Coprario, John Ward, and Thomas Vautor published collections of songs and madrigals for voices and viols commemorating the prince in the years following his death. But the largest musical outpouring of grief can be found in manuscript collections of music for voices and viols such as Thomas Myriell's *Tristitiae Remedium* (GB BL. Add. 29372-7) and the Hamond partbooks (GB Ob. mss.mus.f.20-24) that contain Robert Ramsey's *Dialogues of Sorrow upon the Death of the Late Prince Henrie*. These and a handful of associated manuscripts, including at least one set of part books belonging to John Ward's patron and an intimate of Prince Henry, Sir Henry Fanshawe, constitute a significant portion of the surviving music for voices and viols from the period, containing dozens of pieces for voices and/or viol consort mourning the death of the Prince by many of the major composers of the period, including Byrd, Tomkins, Lupo, Ferrabosco the younger, and John Ward.<sup>98</sup>

Taken together, the elegiac poetic and musical material created in memory of Prince Henry demonstrates the complex conceptions of mourning discussed above. Despite Protestant injunctions against expressions of grief (which Pigman argues began to soften during the early years of the seventeenth century), it seems clear that many Britons were genuinely moved by the death of James I's eldest son and

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<sup>97</sup> J.P. Edmond, "Elegies and Other Tracts Issued on the Death of Henry, Prince of Wales, 1612," *Publications of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* vi (1906): 141-58.

<sup>98</sup> Craig Monson, *Voices and Viols in England, 1600-1650* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982), 8.

heir to the English throne.<sup>99</sup> Joshua Sylvester, a poet in the Prince's household, likely expressed the sentiments of the many courtiers and artists for whom Henry's death was both a personal and professional loss.

But more than most, to Mee, that had no prop

But Henry's hand, and, but in him, no hope.<sup>100</sup>

Irving Godt argues that the many musical settings of Samuel II 18:33, "when David heard" that proliferated in the years immediately after Henry's death (many of them in the manuscript collections mentioned above) allegorize the King's grief for his son.<sup>101</sup> Goodland claims that "many reformers saw King David's mourning for his son Absalom as scriptural sanction to weep over the dead," a claim that, if true, might help further explain the popularity of a text that might otherwise have seemed disrespectful given the strained relations between James and Henry.<sup>102</sup>

Henry's death was an occasion that aroused genuine emotion among a large community of Britons, and scriptural and social sanction for the expression of grief must have been at a premium given the widespread Protestant proscription against mourning. No less because Henry was celebrated as "the champion of the

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<sup>99</sup> Pigman, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy*, 2.

<sup>100</sup> J. Sylvester, *Lachrymae lachrymaru[m] or The spirit of teares distilled for the vn-tymely death of the incomparable prince, Panaretus* (London, 1613), A3.

<sup>101</sup> I. Godt, "Prince Henry as Absalom in David's Lamentations," *Music & Letters* 62, no. 3/4 (1981): 318-330.

<sup>102</sup> Goodland, *Female Mourning and tragedy in medieval and renaissance English drama: from the raising of Lazarus to King Lear*, 5.

Protestants against the Papist threat”.<sup>103</sup> It is worth remembering that much of the anti-Catholic fervor in this period in British history was connected to the “Catholic threat” of imperialist Spain as well as widespread knowledge of the large but nominally hidden population of English recusant Catholics. The capture and execution of Jesuit priests Edmund Campion and Robert Southwell late in Elizabeth’s reign had confirmed Protestant suspicions about the infiltration of England by Catholic spies from Douai and Rome. Duckles notes that the adoption of the madrigal by English poets and composers represented the importation of “a full-blown vocabulary of *dolour*” from Italy.<sup>104</sup> This association between Italian poetry and dolorousness likely played into Protestant anxieties about expressions of grief and the coding of such expressions as Catholic. The fact that so much surviving consort music is associated with networks of English recusant Catholics makes this association particularly relevant, a point that I explore in depth in my chapter “In Voice, in Heart, in Hand Agree”: Consort Music, Devotion, and “Liturgical *Habitus*.”

John Coprario’s *Songs of mourning bevailing the vntimely death of Prince Henry* (1613), seven settings of Campion’s poetry for voice accompanied by lute and bass viol, offers suggestive connections between music and processes of communal mourning. Anxiety about the propriety of grief for the fallen prince is evident in Coprario’s offer in his introduction to help readers mourn the prince guilt-free.

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<sup>103</sup> J. Aplin, “Sir Henry Fanshawe and Two Sets of Early Seventeenth-Century Part-Books at Christ Church, Oxford,” *Music & Letters* 57, no. 1 (1976): 11.

<sup>104</sup> V. Duckles, “The English Musical Elegy of the Late Renaissance,” in *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, ed. J. LaRue (New York: Pendragon Press, 1978), 138.

Now weepe your selves hart sicke, and nere repent:  
 For I will open to your free accesse  
 The sanctuary of all heavinesse:  
 Where men their fill may mourne, and never sinne:<sup>105</sup>

This “sanctuary” is the mournful music of Coprario’s settings of Campion’s poetry.<sup>106</sup>

The idea that music offers sanctuary for mourning in an atmosphere hostile to expressions of grief is particularly evocative when the music in question is intended principally for the experiences it allows its participants, as was virtually all of the music commemorating Henry. It suggests that the act of making chamber music, an unmistakably communal activity, might have evoked the ritual dimensions of mourning. The last line of the excerpt above also recalls the pleasure of sadness mentioned by Dowland, Puttenham, and Burton. Here chamber music is figured as both offering a haven for grief and as a fulfillment of the desire to experience the pleasures of grief, an idea to which Coprario had alluded in his 1606 “Funeral Tears for the Earl of Devonshire.”

Musicke though it sweetens paine  
 Yet no whit empaires lamenting:  
 But in passion like consenting

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<sup>105</sup> J. Coprario, *Songs of mourning bevailing the vntimely death of Prince Henry* (London, 1613), “An Elegie upon the untimely death of Prince Henry.”

<sup>106</sup> Brady, *English Funerary Elegy in the Seventeenth Century: Laws in Mourning*, 42.



Makes them constant that complaine:<sup>107</sup>

Coprario's *Songs of Mourning*, with its group of five songs intimately addressed to individual members of the royal family, casts the collection itself as a consort in which each participant plays his or her part in a communal process of mourning.

### **John Ward's "Weep forth your teares"**

John Ward's six-part "Weep forth your teares" demonstrates how consort music allowed for stylized rituals of mourning and foregrounded the pleasures of sadness. "Weep forth" was published in the *First Set of English Madrigals...apt both for Viols and Voyces, with a Mourning Song in Memory of Prince Henry* (1613) and copied by Thomas Myriell into his *Tristitiae Remedium*. Myriell's monumental set of six partbooks was the most elaborate of several sets of associated partbooks that preserve the majority of the Henrician elegiac repertory for voices and viols. Myriell, an English clergyman and amateur musician, seems to have been at the center of a musical community anchored by St. Paul's cathedral in London. Careful archival and paleographic work by Pamela Willetts, Craig Monson, Ian Payne, and others has shed light on the many interconnections between the clergy, composers, church and amateur musicians, and aristocratic patrons that comprised this vibrant musical

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<sup>107</sup> Duckles, "The English Musical Elegy of the Late Renaissance," 136.

community.<sup>108</sup> This work is too detailed to summarize here, but I will mention a few members of this circle to give a rough idea of the sorts of people that likely gathered to make music from Myriell's partbooks. Nicholas Yonge, the compiler of *Musica Transalpina* (1588) lived in the neighborhood and hosted amateur chamber music making famously described in the preface to that collection.

...since I first began to keepe house in this Citie, it hath been no small comfort vnto mee, that a great number of Gentlemen and Merchants of good accompt (as well of this realme as of forreine nations) haue taken in good part such entertainment of pleasure...by the exercise of Musicke daily vsed in my house...<sup>109</sup>

John Milton the Elder, the composer and father of the poet, had his residence and scrivener's shop right down the street from St. Stephen's, Walbrook, where Myriell was the rector, and contributed several pieces to *Tristitia*. Sir Henry Fanshawe, an intimate of Prince Henry and the Queen's remembrancer in the exchequer, had a house on Warwick Lane, right around the corner from St. Paul's. Fanshawe, in the words of his daughter-in-law Lady Anne Fanshawe, "was a great lover of music and kept many gentleman that were perfectly well qualified both in that, and in the

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<sup>108</sup> Pamela Joan Willetts, "Musical connections of Thomas Myriell," *Music & letters* 49, no. 1 (1968): 36; Pamela Joan Willetts, "The identity of Thomas Myriell," *Music & letters* 53, no. 4 (1972): 431; C. Monson, "Thomas Myriell's Manuscript Collection: One View of Musical Taste in Jacobean London," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30, no. 3 (1977): 419-65; Monson, *Voices and Viols in England, 1600-1650*, 8-10; Ian Payne, "The handwriting of John Ward," *Music & letters* 65, no. 2 (1984): 176; K.E. Smith, "Music for Voices and Viols: A Contextual Study and Critical Performing Edition of Verse Anthems in Christ Church [Oxford] mss 56-60" (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1988).

<sup>109</sup> N. Yonge, *Musica Transalpina* (London, 1588), introductory epistle.

Italian tongue.”<sup>110</sup> He also employed John Ward as a composer in his household and perhaps also as an attorney in the office of the exchequer.<sup>111</sup>

*Tristitiae Remedium* is only one of several sets of surviving partbooks that originated in the St. Paul’s circle of musicians. Christ Church MSS 56-60 and 61-66, as well as a sole surviving altus book from another set, BL Add. 29427, share much of the repertory included in *Tristitiae*, as well as concordances of scribal hands and, in some cases, watermarks.<sup>112</sup> Research by Monson and Kathryn Smith shows that these books were used for amateur chamber music making during the second half of the 1610s and perhaps the 1620s, the years between the deaths of Prince Henry in 1612 and those of Thomas Myriell (in 1625) and Henry Fanshawe (in 1616), who likely owned Christ Church MSS 56-60. Elegies for Prince Henry by Ward appear in all four of these sets, as well as an elegy for Fanshawe added towards the end of Christ Church MSS 56-60. This music, for three to six parts, is scored for various combinations of voices and viols and includes texted and untexted madrigals, verse and full anthems, consort songs, instrumental fantasias and *In nomines*, and elegies.<sup>113</sup> Ward’s “Weep forth,” for example, might have been sung, played with viols doubling the voices (a texture familiar from the verse anthem repertory), played on viols alone (as is suggested by the madrigals copied without text into some of the Myriell partbooks), or with a mixture of voices and viols on the various parts. “Weep forth,” which was the final madrigal in Ward’s published collection of

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<sup>110</sup> Smith, “Music for Voices and Viols: A Contextual Study and Critical Performing Edition of Verse Anthems in Christ Church [Oxford] mss 56-60,” 12.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Monson, *Voices and Viols in England, 1600-1650*, 5.

<sup>113</sup> 4/29/11 1:08 PM See also Aplin, “Sir Henry Fanshawe and Two Sets of Early Seventeenth-Century Part-Books at Christ Church, Oxford.”

1613 and was copied soon after by Myriell into *Tristitia*, would have been well suited to performance by singers on the cantus and altus parts and viols beneath, like Vautor's elegy for the Prince, "Melpomene, bewail thy sister's loss" (1619), scored for two sopranos with accompanying strings.

"Weep forth," though published in Ward's collection of madrigals, bears stylistic resemblance both to the instrumental pavan and the consort anthem, associations that serve its mournfully expressive purpose and that are hardly surprising given the piece's date of composition and survival in the Myriell partbooks. Its six parts set three sentences of text that divide the piece into three strains of roughly equal length; each of which ends with a full cadence and a sustained semibreve in all parts.

Weep forth your tears and do lament. He's dead

Who, living, was of all the world beloved.

Let dolorous lamenting still be spread

Through all the earth, that all hearts may be moved

To sigh and plain

Since Death Prince Henry hath slain.

O had he lived our hopes had still increased;

But he is dead, and all our joys decreased.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> J. Ward, *Madrigals to 3. 4. 5. and 6. parts (published in 1613)* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1922).

Its minim beat and musical phrase lengths ally it with pavans such as Dowland's *Lachrymae* collection, discussed above, and its overall structure calls to mind Christopher Simpson's description of the pavan in his *Compendium of Practical Musick* (1667).

[The pavan was] at first ordained for a grave and stately manner of Dancing (as most Instrumental Musicks were in their several kinds, Fancies and Symphonies excepted) but now grown up to a height of Composition made only to delight the Ear...A Pavan, (be it of 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 Parts) doth commonly consist of three Strains, each Strain to be play'd twice over...<sup>115</sup>

Though Ward did not include repeat signs at the end of each of the three strains of "Weep forth", repetition would be a stylistically viable choice.

A performance on viols with singers doubling the cantus and altus parts is suggested both by "Weep forth"'s compositional details and its position alongside consort songs and anthems in the Myriell sources. Consort songs, such as "A alas" mentioned above, typically feature a sung texted part (usually the altus) with viols playing the remaining parts. Verse anthems alternate between verses sung by solo singers (with optional doubling by viols when performed with viol consort) and accompanied by instruments, and choral sections with instruments and voices doubling all the parts. A performance of "Weep forth", then, that utilized viols with

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<sup>115</sup> C. Simpson, *A compendium of practical musick* (London, 1667), 116.

voices doubling only the top two parts would have been a familiar sonority. Vautor's "Melpomene", mentioned above, as well as two elegies by Michael East published in his *Forth set of books* (1618), "Faire Daphne, gentle shephardess" and "Come Shepherd swaines," all specify this orchestration. "Weep forth" also features two interludes of roughly a dozen cut-time measures each during which the lower four parts continue in the absence of the upper two voices. These "instrumental" interludes are a stylistic commonplace in both the consort song and anthem repertory and further suggest a performance of "Weep forth" for consort with voices only doubling the top two parts.

I dwell here on the issue of singing versus playing the various parts of Ward's madrigal because I want to preempt the objection that my arguments in this chapter are dependent on the text that is attached to many of the parts of this polyphonic repertory. Certainly the presence of text focuses both the experience of the musicians who play these pieces as well as my analysis of them. But this focus is similar in kind to the interpretive focus made possible by any sort of thick contextual description. An instrumental work played at a funeral, for example, will generate meanings specific to that context that are different from the meanings generated when that same piece is played by friends in a sunny music room on a lazy afternoon (though, of course, there would also be points of continuity between both performances). The texts of "Ah, alas" and "Weep forth" offer additional contextual information that inflect both the performances of those pieces and my analyses of them but does not displace my central claim, that polyphonic music for viols (with and without voices) offers insight into early modern modes of sociality

and communal interaction. As the combination of madrigals, consort songs, anthems, fantasias, and *In nomines* in the Myriell partbooks demonstrates, there was considerable permeability between music for voices and music for viol consort during the period. The phrase adopted by modern scholars, “for voices and viols,” is an apt description of this repertory, and is found on the title pages of virtually every publication of madrigals and consort songs in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. It is the partwriting conventions that governed this repertory that are largely responsible, I believe, for the sorts of interactions between players that it enabled and that focus my interpretive approach. These conventions, and the meanings they choreograph, are activated whether the music is sung or played. Basing my analysis of “Weep forth” on a hypothetical performance that utilizes voices and viols casts a wide interpretive net and allows for some exploration of the play of meaning across the two very different, though related, acts of musical embodiment that constitute singing and playing. This “play of meaning” across (and between) the two domains of singing versus playing viols present theoretical challenges that I tackle differently in each of my subsequent chapters.

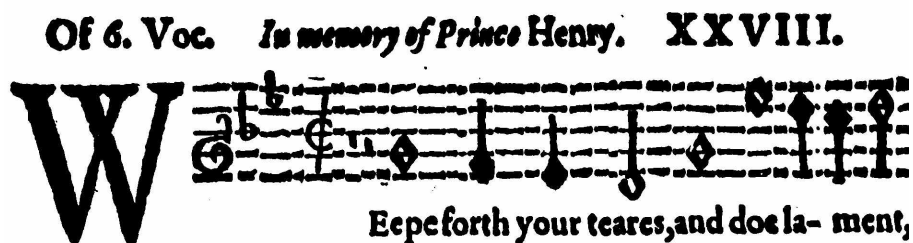


Figure 7. “Weepe forth your teares” opening motive from John Ward’s *The first set of English madrigals* (1613).

“Weep forth” offers a rich field for the ritualized mourning that I argue it was designed to simulate. That it is a mourning piece is signaled musically from the very beginning by Ward’s quotation of Dowland’s *“lachrimae”* theme as the opening motive (figure 7), a move that obviates further the need for singers declaiming the text of the lower parts. The early modern conception of mourning as a communal process, as described above, is dramatized by musical occasions in “Weep forth” that foreground the social dimensions of playing chamber music. Two brief moments of homophony punctuate the middle strain of the madrigal, setting the phrases “through all the earth” (figure 8) and “to sigh” (see figure 9)—moments that unmistakably draw the players’ attention to the corporation of the ensemble. After measure after measure of imitative polyphony, homophony in all six parts requires an immediate shift of attention to the visual and aural clues that allow an ensemble to play together (example 8). This focus on the other members of the ensemble in an effort to shape the rhetorical and musical phrase “to sigh,” as well as to appreciate the sensory satisfaction that the successful execution of the gesture offers, foregrounds a consciousness of the communal nature of the experience. Homophony in this musical and social context, like in the Dowland pavan with which this chapter begins, offers a moment of convergence of sensory experience and bodily agency among the members of the ensemble that recalls the ritual dimensions of mourning.



The image displays a musical score for John Ward's hymn "Weep forth your tears." The score is written for six voices, arranged in three pairs of staves (Soprano/Alto, Tenor 1/Tenor 2, and Bass 1/Bass 2). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "-ing, still be spread, Tho - rough all the earth, tho -", "-ment - ing still be spread, Tho - rough all the earth, tho -", "Tho - rough all the earth,", "- ing still be spread, Tho - rough all the earth,", "still be spread, Tho - rough all the earth, the", and "Tho - rough all the earth, tho -". A grey rectangular box highlights the phrase "Tho - rough all the earth" across all six staves, illustrating the concept of homophony where all voices sing the same words simultaneously.

Figure 8. Homophony ("Through all the earth") in John Ward's "Weep forth your tears."<sup>116</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Ward 1922, 224

The image displays two systems of a musical score for John Ward's "Weep forth your tears." Each system consists of six staves (three vocal parts and three lute parts). The first system covers the lyrics "hearts may be mov - ed To sigh, to" and "-ed, that all hearts may be moved To sigh, to". The second system covers "mov - ed, may be moved To sigh, to" and "that all hearts may be mov - ed To sigh, to". The lyrics "sigh and plain, Since death hath slain Prince" are repeated across the second system. The phrase "to sigh" is highlighted in grey in the original image, indicating homophony across the different parts.

Figure 9. Homophony ("to sigh") in John Ward's "Weep forth your tears."

Ward's treatment of dissonance in "Weep forth" is also notable in relation to the madrigal's role as an elegy. Moments of dissonance proliferate, as on the second syllable of the word "lament" in the first strain when the suspended "c" in the cantus clashes with the "d" in the quintus (figure 10). Here, these moments offer an obvious but nonetheless affecting homology with the psychic "pain" suggested by the text.

Awareness of the harmonic and rhythmic relationship of one's part to the parts played by the other members of the ensemble is the most basic and important competency for a consort player. Dissonance foregrounds one's relationship to other players by intensifying the musical—in this case “harmonic”—relationship between parts. Competent consort players are highly attuned to moments of dissonance, and will typically look up from their parts to make eye contact—and perhaps exchange a fleeting smile—when their parts “rub up” against each other. Dissonance (“discord” in the terminology of the times) is figured as “painful” in mournful music for voices and viols, as dissonant settings of words like “pain” or “burn” in the madrigal and consort song repertoires attest. This “pain” is also pleasurable, and exemplifies the paradox of sad music in English culture—the “pleasant...teares which Musicke weepes” that forms the thematic basis of this chapter. At the same time, in the form of controlled dissonance, pain highlights the social dimensions of the partwriting. Dissonant “pain” serves to foreground and intensify players' awareness of each other. These two conventional features of the genre are ideally suited to participatory musical elegy, and appropriate the interactive musical language of consort music to the communal, stylized performance of sadness.

[illegible]

**Figure 10.** Dissonance (“lament”) in John Ward’s “Weep forth your tears.”

But some caution is in order here, some suspicion about the depth of the musical acts of mourning for which the Henrician elegies likely served as scripts. Doubtless Henry Fanshawe and his circle were genuinely grieved by the loss of the young Prince, but manuscript evidence testifies to a history of use of the manuscripts containing the elegies that exceeds any reasonable expectation of true mourning.<sup>117</sup> Doring theorizes representations of grief on the Elizabethan stage in a

<sup>117</sup> Smith, "Music for Voices and Viols: A Contextual Study and Critical Performing Edition of Verse Anthems in Christ Church [Oxford] mss 56-60," 19.

way that offers insight, I believe, into the cultural practices entailed in the repeated performance of Henrician musical elegy. “Mimetic weeping here emerges as a strategy which produces and legitimates new forms of communal bonding.”<sup>118</sup>

Doring argues that true grief was understood to be ineffable and inexpressible while physical signs of sadness such as crying were treated with suspicion (given the human capacity for dissimulation). Doring cites a story from Herodotus that circulated widely in Elizabethan writings on grief and mourning about an Egyptian king who didn’t shed tears when his country was overthrown and his daughter and son killed, but cried on behalf of one of his subjects who had been impoverished by the war. “The story shows the logic by which tears and weeping can only address distanced suffering, whereas personal and close pains remain dumb. By the same token, however, weeping signals distant afflictions or passion pain.”<sup>119</sup> Because weeping was understood as compassionate rather than passionate, more a response to the distant grief of another than the intensity of personal feeling, weeping signaled sociality. “Thus, the classic model story serves to introduce the figure of a weeping third, a social representative who is eye-witness to others in their suffering and, by means of shedding tears, testifies that their pain is being acknowledged.”<sup>120</sup>

Weeping, in Doring’s account, is mimetic and thus “produces and legitimates new forms of communal bonding” that help to fill the absences of ritual—especially *mourning* ritual—created by Protestant injunction. The third strain of “Weep forth” begins with an anguished, groaning “o” in the quintus, a solitary cry following the

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<sup>118</sup> Doring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture*, 22.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

grim announcement of the previous cadence that “death hath slain Prince Henry.”

The remaining five voices answer as one, echoing the quintus in a stylized utterance of grief (figure 11). This moment is doubly mimetic; the rest of the ensemble imitates the lone quintus, acting the part of Doring’s “weeping third,” even as the consort engages in a ritualized performance of mourning that echoes, with its musical imitation of a groan, the genuine experience of grieving the dead Prince. Similarly, I read the imitation between the top two voices on the keening phrase “but he is dead” in terms of Doring’s notion of mimetic weeping. The stylized cry of the quintus answers that of the cantus in a musical emulation of sympathetic tears (figure 12). What is fascinating to me about these examples is that they occur at the most conventional moments of the madrigal. Ward’s use of one voice to anticipate the entrance of the rest of the ensemble, like the points of literal imitation between the upper parts, is a standard feature of music for voices and viols. That these conventions might have so successfully served the mournful purposes of elegiac consort music is suggestive of the form’s deep connection to discourses of English sadness.

Figure 11 displays a musical score for six staves, likely representing different vocal parts. The lyrics are: "He - ne - ry, 0, 0 had he". The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The music features a mix of half notes, quarter notes, and rests. A vertical grey bar highlights the second measure of the score, which contains the lyrics "0," across all staves.

Figure 11. "Double mimesis" in Ward's "Weep forth you tears."

Figure 12 displays a musical score for six staves, likely representing different vocal parts. The lyrics are: "ed, But he is dead, -creas ed, But he is dead, still in - creas ed, But he is dead, but". The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The music features a mix of half notes, quarter notes, and rests. The lyrics are distributed across the staves, with some staves having multiple lines of lyrics.

dead, but he is dead, and all our  
 but he is dead, but he is dead, and  
 dead, but he is dead, and all our joys de -  
 he is dead,  
 but he is dead,

but he is dead, but he is  
 joys de - creas - ed, but  
 all our joys de - creas - ed, but he is dead,  
 - creas - ed, but  
 but he is dead, is dead,  
 but he is dead,



dead, but he is dead,  
 he is dead, but he is  
 but he is dead, but  
 he is dead, he is dead, but he is  
 but he is dead, but he is dead,  
 but he is dead, and

and all our joys, our joys de - ceas - ed.  
 dead, and all our joys de - ceas - ed.  
 he is dead, and all our joys de - ceas - ed.  
 dead, and all our joys de - ceas - ed.  
 but he is dead, and all our joys de - ceas - ed.  
 all our joys, our joys de - ceas - ed.

Figure 12. "But he is dead" imitation in the top two voices in Ward's "Weep forth you tears."

## Conclusion

In his poetic elegie for Prince Henry, Joshua Sylvester asks,

Could Teares and Feares give my Distractions leave,  
Of sobbing words a sable webbe to weave.<sup>121</sup>

The web that consort music's polyphony allows its players to weave is both comforting and ennobling in its transformation of lamenting into music. Dowland's seven instrumental *Lachrymae* pavans illustrate the complexity of Sylvester's metaphor as I apply it to consort music. In the first of the set, the "*Lachrymae Antiqua*," each member of the ensemble is given an opportunity to play Dowland's melancholic motive. Yet these individual performances of the *lachrymae* theme are woven together into a musical texture whose appeal to its players is unmistakably dependent on its corporate nature. Dowland's partwriting makes use of the conventions discussed in "Ah, alas" and "Weep forth," allowing for pleasurable interactions among members of the ensemble even as they are appropriated to the creation of music that both models and allows for a stylized, ritualized grief. Consort music weaves each player's independent musical priorities into a web of interdependent interactions. This simultaneity of the individual and the corporate resonates with the relationship between melancholy as a solitary performance of identity and mourning as communal ritual. Melancholy and mourning, despite their different emotional and discursive trajectories, share a common vocabulary of tropes, and were each decried as effeminate, morally suspect, and solipsistic. The suspicion that they generated was coterminous with the anxiety that was widely expressed by moralists like William Prynne about the perils of music.

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<sup>121</sup> Sylvester, *Lachrymae lachrymaru[m]* or *The spirit of teares distilled for the vn-tymely death of the incomparable prince, Panaretus*.

Music for voices and viols such as consort songs and madrigals, as well as the purely instrumental music for viol consort such as that by Dowland, Anthony Holborne and later Thomas Tomkins and William Lawes, resists conceptions of melancholy and mourning that map too readily onto a dichotomy of individual subjectivity versus communal sociality. The consort song's setting of melancholic poetry for solo voice requires the participation of an ensemble whose parts weave together in sensuous support of the melancholic text. Elegiac music for voices and viols enlists partwriting conventions to create an atmosphere of ritualized *communal* mourning that is nevertheless comprised of individual parts that reference melancholic subjectivity. When William Lawes, who emulated Dowland in the pavan of his consort suite in C-minor, was killed in the battle of Chester in 1645 during the English Civil War, Charles I was

so ingrossed with grief for the death of so near a Kinsman, and Noble a Lord, but that hearing of the death of his deare servant William Lawes, he had a particular Mourning for him when dead, whom he loved when living, and commonly called the Father of Musick.<sup>122</sup>

This mournful tribute to one of the great composers of consort music is a further testament to a tradition that wove together, in a particularly English manner, the strands of sadness, pleasure, and music. Charles' grief on the death of

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<sup>122</sup> From Fuller's *A History of the Worthies of England* (1662) quoted in Layton Ring, "Wednesday, 24 September, 1645: The Death of William Lawes during the Battle of Rowton Heath at the Siege of Chester," in *William Lawes (1602-1645): essays on his life, times, and work*, ed. A. Ashbee (Aldershot, England; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 156.

his "deare servant" was not misplaced. Lawes commands an almost mythological status among modern consort enthusiasts, and his playful, virtuosic, and eccentric compositions for viol consort have inspired several monographs and numerous recordings. Today, his consort music is better known than that of virtually any other composer, a fact that echoes his fame among early modern enthusiasts like Anthony Wood and the who's who of Caroline composers including Simon Ives and John Jenkins who contributed music to the memorial collection in Lawes' honor, the *Choice Psalmes* of 1648. The next chapter focuses on Lawes' consort music, though in a very different affective register from the elegies that conclude the present one. Lawes music is idiosyncratic and tricky to perform, and I pursue the idea that it offers unique insights into consort music as vehicle for wit and aristocratic self-fashioning.

## III

“These things were never made for words”: “Instrumental” Wit and Performative Self-Fashioning in the Consort Music of William Lawes

One Mr Saunders, who loved Musick so well, as he could not endure to have it interrupted with the least unseasonable Noises; being at a meeting of Fancy Musick, only for the viols and Organ; where many Ladyes and Gentlewomen resorted; some wanton Tongues could not Refraine their chatt, and lowd whispers, sometime above the Instruments: He, impatient of such harsh Discords as they often interposd, The lesson being Ended, riseth with his viole from his Seate, and soberly Addressing himself towards them; Ladyes, sayes he, This Musicke is not vocall, for on my Knowledge, These Things were never made for words. and after That they had not one word to say.<sup>1</sup>

This anecdote offers rare testimony about the social world of the viol consort. Credited to composer and viol player John Jenkins (1592–1678), one of the idiom’s most loyal and prolific contributors, it was collected in “Merry Passages and Jeasts” (Gb-Lbl Harleian MS. 6395), a manuscript jestbook containing over six-hundred “jests” belonging to the Le Strange family of Hunstanton, Norfolk. The Le Strange household is the origin of numerous important manuscript collections of

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<sup>1</sup> H.F. Lippincott, ed., *“Merry Passages and Jeasts”: A Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange (1603-1655)*, vol. 29, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1974), 144.

consort music, and the family's estate in Hunstanton was likely the setting of Jenkins' jest about the imperious consort player "Mr. Saunders."<sup>2</sup> Sir Hamon Le Strange (c.1583-1654) was a patron of both literature and music and his three sons Nicholas (1604-1655), Hamon (1605-1660) and Roger (1616-1704) all played the viol, as did Sir Hamon's wife, Lady Alice.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the house in Hunstanton was frequented by numerous professional musicians, including the composer and viol player Thomas Brewer and the aforementioned John Jenkins, all of whom likely took their place in the consort in the Hunstanton music room.<sup>4</sup>

Jenkins' jest reveals a fascinating friction between the intertwined domains of music and speech, a friction that I argue was endemic to the cultural practice(s) of consort playing and that sets the critical agenda of this chapter. The act of music making by Saunders' viol consort is represented as simultaneously continuous and competitive with speech—both the hushed whispers of the room's female occupants as well as Saunders' silencing reply. His speech act is a coda to the musical utterances of the "fancy" (fantasia) music, and is precipitated by the competition posed by the women's "chatt" to the intricate musical conversation of the consort. I read Saunders' witty retort to the "wanton tongues" for its claim to the performative capacity of musical utterance, a capacity that must be defended against the "harsh discords" of gendered gossip. The jest turns on a disagreement about the relative

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<sup>2</sup> A. Ashbee, "'My Fiddle is a Bass Viol': Music in the life of Sir Roger L'Estrange," in *Sir Roger L'Estrange and the Making of Restoration Culture*, ed. A. Dunan-Page and B. Lynch (Ashgate, 2008); A. Ashbee, R. Thompson, and J. Wainwright, Viola da Gamba Society (Great Britain), *The Viola da Gamba Society index of manuscripts containing consort music* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 6; Pamela Willetts, "Sir Nicholas Le Strange and John Jenkins," *Music & Letters* 42, no. 1 (1961): 30-43.

<sup>3</sup> Ashbee, "'My Fiddle is a Bass Viol': Music in the life of Sir Roger L'Estrange," 149.

<sup>4</sup> Ashbee, "'My Fiddle is a Bass Viol': Music in the life of Sir Roger L'Estrange."

significance of musical utterance: if the musical statements of the players are akin to the “whispers” of the onlookers, then the gentlewoman’s conversation is entitled a bit of the aural real estate of the Le Strange music room. If, on the other hand, the musical utterances bear particular meanings about the consort players who made them, are, in other words, performative, then the women’s “chatt” becomes “unseasonable noise,” a disturbance to the carefully crafted rhetoric of the polyphony. The humor rests both in Jenkins’ insider reference to texted polyphony (Jenkins and the members of the Le Strange family would have had easy familiarity with the connections between “vocall” madrigals and instrumental consort music), and—more importantly—the gendered contrast between the disordered, meaningless utterance of the “chat” and the ordered, performative, *significant* utterances of the consort. The phrase “never meant for words” is wittily ironic here: the musical utterances are meaningful, Saunders suggests, even though they bear no semantic content. Spoken language, on the other hand, is cast as devoid of significance—the “lowd whispers,” though comprised of words, are figured as meaningless “noises,” while the music, “never meant for words,” bears meaning.

But what, and how, do the musical utterances of the consort mean? In what register do they signify? And what is at stake in the assertion that whispered chat, consort playing, and the telling and writing of jests do or don’t constitute “performance”? I base my account of wit in the consort music of William Lawes on two claims: that performance is a powerful tool for the crafting of identity, and that in early modern England wit served as an important discursive site of the theorization of performance, in particular its deployment as a strategy of self-

fashioning. Performance is social and rhetorical—it is behavior crafted to affect those who witness it in particular ways. Performance is intentional, and this quality of intention is what makes it such a potent vector of identity, for the moment of performance is marked both by a heightened experience and projection of self. Jenkins' jest nests performances inside performances: the humorous anecdotes of *Merry Passages* are themselves transcriptions of past performances, written down as scripts to be performed, and Mr. Saunders "riseth with his viole from his seate" and advocates for one performance (that of the "fancy music") with the witty quip of another.<sup>5</sup> In so doing he claims a rhetorical mastery, an individuating move potent enough to preserve his name alongside that of the author of the jest itself. *Merry Passages* also contains several jests about the composer William Lawes, and it is to his compositions for viol consort I'll turn to illustrate the "instrumental" wit staged by Jenkins' jest.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> As Pamela Allen Brown notes of *Merry Passages and Jeasts*, "both textuality and orality have been put into play by a third power, the social consort of performance." P.A. Brown, "Jesting Rights: Women Players in the Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange," in *Women Players in England 1500-1660: beyond the all-male stage*, ed. P.A. Brown and P. Parolin (Aldershot, Hampshire, England : Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 306.

<sup>6</sup> For more on Lawes' life and work, see M. Lefkowitz, *William Lawes* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960); D. Pinto, "William Lawes' Consort Suites for the Viols, and the Autograph Sources," *Chelys* 4 (1972): 11-16; D. Pinto, "William Lawes' Music for Viol Consort," *Early Music* 6, no. 1 (1978): 12-24; D. Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes* (Surrey: Fretwork Editions, 1995); A. Ashbee, ed., *William Lawes (1602-1645): essays on his life, times, and work* (Aldershot, England; Brookfield, Vt: Ashgate, 1998); M. Davenport, "The Dances and Aires of William Lawes (1602-1645): Context and Style" (Boulder, CO: PhD Dissertation, University of Colorado at BoulderEditor, 2001); John Patrick Cunningham, *The consort music of William Lawes, 1602-1645* (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2010).



### Lawes' G-minor Aire, VDGS 337

Lawes' four-part aire in g-minor (VdGS 337) typifies Lawes' quirky partwriting for viol consort. I will discuss two brief, puzzling episodes in this aire, casting them as instances of musical wit—as constituting utterances through which the musicians playfully inflect the musical discourse. The sixteen-measure g-minor aire is found in the Shirley Partbooks (GB-Lbl Add. MSS 40,657-61, see figure 1), a manuscript collection partially in Lawes' hand copied about 1626 and later for the Shirley family, baronets (later Earls Ferrers) of Staunton Harrold, Leicestershire.<sup>7</sup> Like the Le Strange family, the Shirley family played consort music from manuscript collections as a form of social recreation during the 1620s, 30s, and 40s, the period of the compilation of much of *Merry Passages*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes*, 11-15.

<sup>8</sup> Pinto, "William Lawes' Consort Suites for the Viols, and the Autograph Sources."

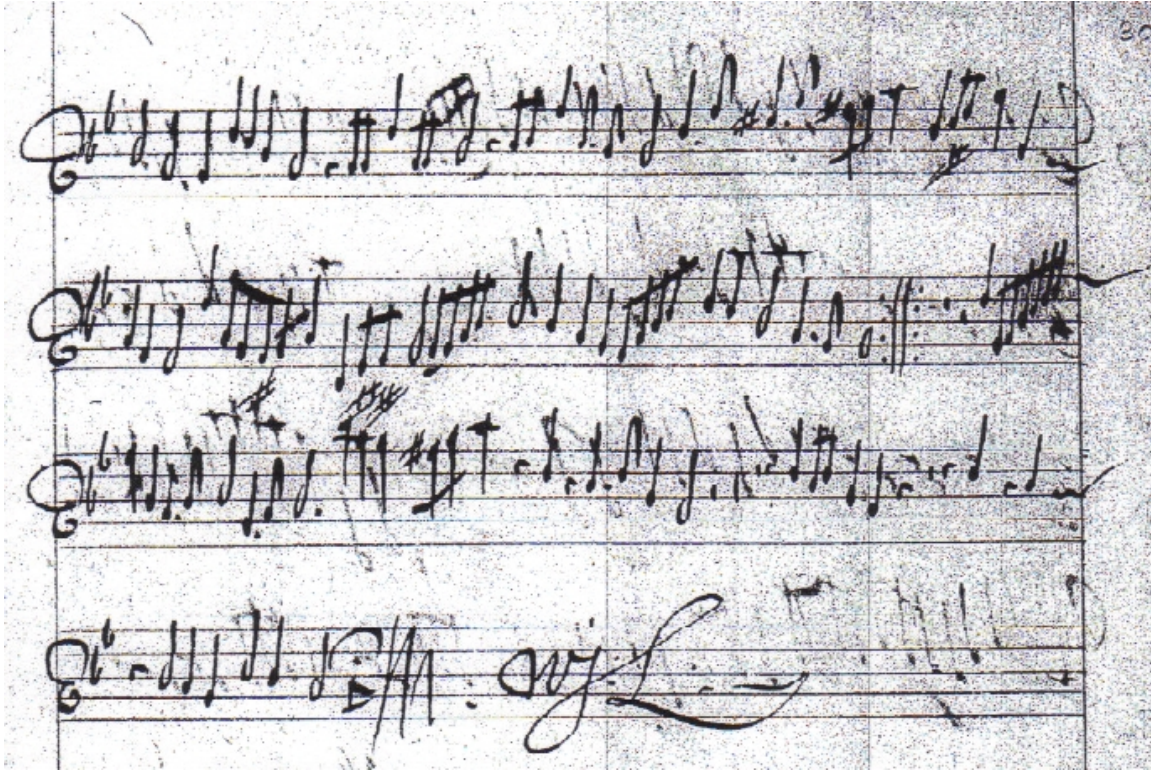


Figure 13. Treble I of William Lawes g-minor aire (VdGS 337) from the Shirley Partbooks (GB-Lbl Add. MSS 40,657-61).

The aire's engaging motivic interplay and quick changes of ensemble texture foreground the complex interactions of the four polyphonic voices. Homophonic gestures alternate responsorially with solo utterances in the top parts, alliances shift between voice pairs, and there are moments of full, four-voiced imitative polyphony. The rapidly shifting textures contribute to the playfulness of the aire as the parts dart and feint among each other and then converge in brief homophonic episodes. A brisk aire tempo, suggested by the slow harmonic rhythm and the sprightly character of many of the motives, mitigates the pathos typically associated

with g minor. Also, prominent closes (cadences) on the relative major, Bb, in each strain (mm. 3 and 14) brighten the overall affect of the piece.<sup>9</sup>

Wit, as we'll see, is closely connected to patterns of speech and conversation. One of consort music's stylistic debts to the madrigal is its use of partwriting that evokes spoken exchange. This debt is recalled by the beginning of VdGS 337 with its madrigal-like homophonic declamation in all four voices. Madrigals by Marenzio, Monteverdi, and Coprario appear in the Shirley partbooks without text, presumably for performance on viols, alongside VdGS 337 and other consort music by Lupo, Ferrabosco II, Coprario and others.<sup>10</sup>

The first instance of wit I'll discuss in Lawes' aire occurs in mm. 2-3 as part of a dialogue between treble I and the lower voices of the ensemble. Treble I introduces Lawes' first "point" (motive) following the madrigal-like homophonic exordium, a figure comprised of two quavers followed by a crotchet that David Pinto has dubbed the "William Lawes anapest" for its frequency of use by the composer and for its rhythmic evocation of his name—short-short long, Will-iam Lawes (see figure 2 for the 1<sup>st</sup> strain of VdGS 337).<sup>11</sup> The specifically speech-like quality of this figure contributes to a sense of dialogue as it is deployed alternately between treble I and the lower parts. Treble I initiates the back-and-forth with an unaccompanied statement of the anapest on an ascending fourth and is immediately joined in an answering repetition of the figure by the rest of the ensemble. Before Treble I can

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<sup>9</sup> VdGS 337 appears without barlines in GB-Lbl Add. MSS 40,657-61. For clarity, I'll be using Layton Ring's 1964 edition barred in 4/2, W. Lawes, C. Dolmetsch, and L. Ring, *William Lawes Pavan and Two Aires A4 in G Minor UE 12648* (UniversalLawes, W., 1964).

<sup>10</sup> For a complete list of the contents of the Shirley Partbooks (GB-Lbl Add. MSS 40657-61), see Ashbee, Thompson, and Wainwright, *The Viola da Gamba Society index of manuscripts containing consort music*, 71.

<sup>11</sup> Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes*, 129.

respond, however, the lower voices repeat the motive out of turn, moving to an F chord. Treble I, as if in surprise at being preempted, reiterates the motive a third higher over the sustained chord of the lower voices. The whole ensemble answers with a final William Lawes anapaest that resolves on the relative major, Bb, in the middle of m. 3. Seemingly not content to allow treble I to blend with the rest of the consort in this last statement, Lawes gives the part a dotted quaver-semiquaver cadential figure instead of the paired quavers in the other parts. The result is a differentiation of the top voice from the homophony of the lower voices, a slight, graceful embellishment of the figure that effects a primly elegant recovery from the preceding mis-timed dialogue.

measure 1

"William Lawes anapaests" dialogue

measure 5

ostentatious descending bassline

Figure 14. William Lawes g-minor aire (VdGS 337), 1st strain<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Lawes, Dolmetsch, and Ring, *William Lawes Pavan and Two Aires A4 in G Minor UE 12648*, 3.

This brief exchange establishes the members of the ensemble as agents in interaction with each other, in this case an interaction that feels mischievously off kilter. The homophonic anapests in the lower parts, which seem unmistakably to answer the solo utterance of the highest voice, invite an experience of confederacy among their players in opposition to treble I. Treble I claims rhetorical authority by introducing the anapest (an authority that is perhaps enhanced by the motive's capacity to "speak" the composer's name), but it is a tenuous authority, as is demonstrated by the lower parts' "speaking out of turn" with their immediate second statement of the anapest. The call and response template familiar from half a century of madrigals dictates that the solo voice repeat its figure just after the ensemble's first response, yielding call(solo)-response(ensemble)-call(solo)-response(ensemble). A passage of Marenzio's four-part madrigal *Vezzosi Augelli*, published by Thomas Watson in London in an "Englished" version in 1590, for example, typifies this pattern that Lawes' partwriting in VdGS 337 contravenes (see figure 3). But, as Jenkins' jest dramatizes, speech is power. Rhetoric is a currency of authority that wit can inflate or devalue. Treble I reasserts itself against the challenge of the lower voices, repeating the anapest a third higher and then transfiguring it with a compensatory ornament into the first structural cadence of the strain. In the context of a brisk aire characterized by quick textural changes and snippets of musical dialogue, the anapests episode draws attention both to familiar patterns of conversation and its disruption of them. As we'll see, these are precisely the rhetorical circumstances in which wit was understood to flourish.

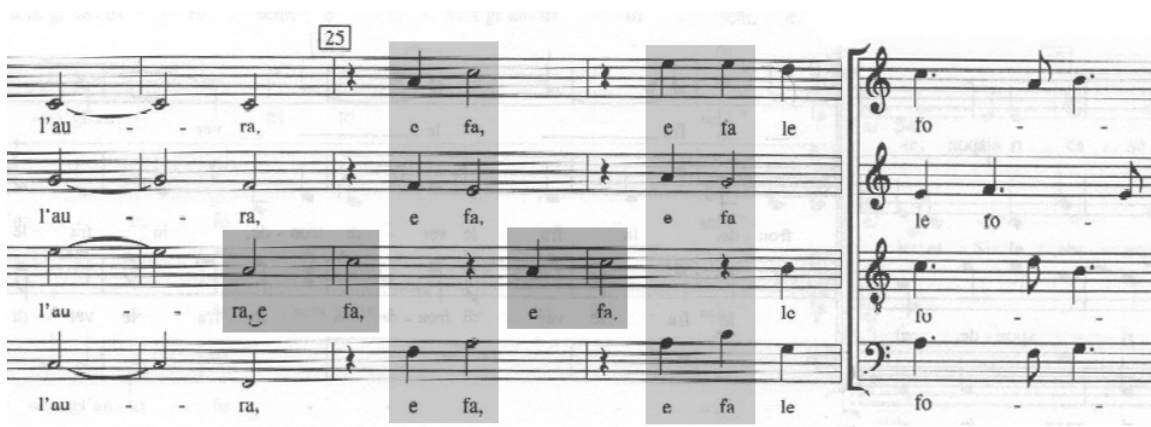


Figure 15. Luca Marenzio 'Vezzosi Augelli' showing typical pattern of dialogue, here between the tenor and the other voices.<sup>13</sup>

The second “witty” musical utterance that I’ll discuss in VdGS 337 occurs in the bass as it accompanies a singing duet in the trebles in the second half of the first strain (see figure 2). While the trebles remain comfortably within the compass of an octave, the bass descends a full two octaves in unbroken crotchets. There is an ostentatious surplus here. A descent by step of two full octaves in uniform note values is conspicuous by any measure, and here its ostensible purpose is to accompany the singing duet of the trebles, a self-effacing role that should deflect—rather than attract—attention. Furthermore, Lawes emphasized the plummeting bass line by placing its termination on an authoritative low D, the lowest note on the instrument. This note can only be played using the bottom open string on the bass viol, and to do so the player must push the instrument away from his body with his left hand so as to allow the bow to clear the leg. The curve of the bridge on a bass viol is steep enough that Christopher Simpson cautioned players to “order your

<sup>13</sup> J. Steele, *Luca Marenzio: The Complete Four Voice Madrigals* (New York: Gaudia Music and Arts, Inc., 1995), 60.

knees so, that they be no impediment to the motion of the bow.”<sup>14</sup> This physical gesture—the pushing of the instrument’s neck and head forward into the intimate collective space of the consort—punctuates the end of the bass player’s long descent, adding an impertinent exclamation point to the extravagant 14-crotchet descent to the minim low D. The remaining lower voices converge with the bass line, each landing on a minim member of the dominant D major chord along with the bass as if brought up short by the lowest part’s playful excess.

Like Mr. Saunders’ punch line in Jenkins’ jest, the descending bass line rends for a brief moment the fabric of the polyphony, arresting the motion of the lower voices and leaving them, like the gentlewomen of the jest, without “one word to say.” As the Jenkins jest demonstrates, a witty remark is disruptive and thereby claims for its speaker a particular power. Mr. Saunders silences the room with his quip, appointing himself a “master of discourse,” to use Susan Purdie’s term.<sup>15</sup> But, as Purdie notes, a successful joke does not just disrupt, it also resolves the disruption it has caused. “Funniness,” she writes, “involves at once breaking rules and ‘marking’ that break, so that correct behaviour is implicitly instated.”<sup>16</sup> There is thus a dialectic between the joker’s claim to individual power and her commitment to the integrity of the social fabric. Similarly, wit’s disruption is ultimately socially productive; it generates social energy and contributes to the creative communality of the gathering even as it appropriates some of that energy as social capital. The bass player’s two-octave descent in the first strain of VdGS 337 exemplifies this very

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<sup>14</sup> Christopher Simpson, *Chelys minuritionum artificio exornata/The Division-viol, or The Art of Playing Extempore upon a Ground* (London, 1665), 3.

<sup>15</sup> S. Purdie, *Comedy: the mastery of discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

dialectic. Its contribution to the functional counterpoint of the aire is inflected by its outrageous excess, a noticeable departure from its workaday behavior during the rest of the aire. It serves to accompany the treble duet and mark the beginning of the strain's cadential machinations on a dominant D major chord even as it calls attention to itself and its performer. In one gesture it both individuates and contributes to the shared project of music making. The resolution of these two complexly related social priorities, the accumulation of social capital through witty self-presentation and the productive contribution to an ongoing, collectively sustained social interaction, was, as we'll see, an important element of the early modern conception of wit.

### **Wit and Performative Self-Fashioning**

Early modern writings on wit reveal it as a capacity that operated in both text and act, as simultaneously a faculty of mind and an ethos of expression, and as essential to aesthetic and critical projects of the period.<sup>17</sup> Thomas Hobbes' mid-seventeenth-century definition typifies the intellectual and inventive values associated with wit,

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<sup>17</sup> A. Stein, "On Elizabethan Wit," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 1, no. 1 (1961): 75-91; C.J. Summers, T.-L. Peabworth, and T.-L. Peabworth, *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press/Summers, C.J., 1995); W.L. Ustick and H.H. Hudson, "Wit, 'Mixt Wit,' and the Bee in Amber," *The Huntington Library Bulletin* 8 (1935): 103-130; J. Dillon, "Elizabethan Comedy," in *Cambridge Companions Online* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); R. Freitas, "Singing and Playing: The Italian Cantata and the Rage for Wit," *Music and Letters* 82, no. 4 (2001); C. Holcomb, *Mirth Making: The Rhetorical Discourse on Jest in Early Modern England* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).



that quick ranging of mind...which is joined with curiosity of comparing the things that come into the mind, one with another: in which comparison, a man delighteth himself...with finding unexpected similitude of things, otherwise much unlike, in which men place the excellency of fancy, and from whence proceed those grateful similes, metaphors, and other tropes...<sup>18</sup>

Hobbes' conception of a "quick ranging of mind" attuned to "unexpected similitude" represents an understanding of wit that is closely linked to the semantic properties of spoken language. The "grateful similes, metaphors, and other tropes" that Hobbes attributes to wit all take as their basis the capacity of language to signify, and the most common register of "witty" language use is the playful manipulation of this capacity. A pun, for example, draws humorous attention to the "unexpected similitude" (or lack thereof) of the meanings of the members of a pair of homonyms. This same notion of the comparison of unlike things animates Jenkins' jest above. Mr. Saunders' witty quip plays along the axis of identification between *meaningful* polyphony of (untexted) consort music and the *meaningless* gossip of the gentlewomen.

But instrumental music, lacking words, does not signify in the same way as spoken language, a fact that has complicated studies of wit and music.<sup>19</sup> Hobbes'

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<sup>18</sup> *Human Nature, or the Fundamental Elements of Policy* (dated 1640 but not published until 1650); in *English Works*, ed. Sir William Molesworth, IV (1840), 55-56, quoted in Ustick and Hudson, "Wit, 'Mixt Wit,' and the Bee in Amber," 107.

<sup>19</sup> Wye J. Allenbrook, "Theorizing the Comic Surface," in *Music in the Mirror*, ed. Andreas Giger and Thomas J. Mathiesen (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, n.d.); Freitas, "Singing and Playing:

definition of wit has proved useful to literary history and criticism, but seems to have little direct bearing on the *musical* experience of wit that I argue is an important effect of the instrumental consort music of William Lawes. Consort music's stylistic debt to the Italian madrigal includes the use of musical techniques that evoke spoken language without necessarily partaking of its capacity to signify.<sup>20</sup> The "William Lawes anapests" in VdGS 337, for example, suggest the syllabic and dialogic, as well as the semantic, qualities of speech. Similarly, the opening homophony of the *aire*, modeled on the homophonic exordium of the madrigal, evokes the morphology of spoken (Italian) utterance with its syllables of varying length and accent. These qualities relate to spoken language as a physical process, enacted by bodies sensitive to pitch and duration and intensity of sound, an action timed and inflected and intended, ultimately, to "mean" in registers of which the semantic is only one.

These extra-semantic registers of meaning fall under the category of performance—of style—the "how" of an act as opposed to its "what." Richard Flecknoe, writing just a few decades after Hobbes, offers an alternate vision of wit, one that shifts the focus from content to style, from text to performance.

Wit...is the spirit and quintessence of speech, extracted out of the  
substance of the thing we speak of...it is that, in pleasant and facetious

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The Italian Cantata and the Rage for Wit."; Gretchen A. Wheelock, *Haydn's "ingenious jesting with art": contexts of musical wit and humor* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Borgerding discusses some of these non-denotational aspects of language in his essay on the rhetorical figure of *pronunciatio* in Todd Borgerding, "Preachers, 'Pronunciatio,' and Music: Hearing Rhetoric in Renaissance Sacred Polyphony," *The Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 3/4 (n.d.): 586-98.

discourse, as Eloquence is in grave and serious; not learnt by Art and Precept, but Nature and Company.<sup>21</sup>

“Spirit and quintessence” are performative qualities, and refer to what wit *does* to speech, rather than what wit itself is. Flecknoe’s description registers wit’s extemporaneity (“extracted out of the substance of the thing we speak of”) as well as its sociality (“learnt by...Company”), two elements essential to a concept of performativity.

Recent scholarship has focused on these performative qualities of wit, and has sought in early modern writings on the subject an account of wit’s role in acts of aristocratic self-fashioning.<sup>22</sup> Frank Whigham has described how an increase in social mobility during the sixteenth century complicated the ascription of nobility. No longer did a venerable name and title provide the only access to aristocratic privilege; rather, gentlemanly status could be attained through the facile exhibition of courtly behavior. “For established and mobile Elizabethans alike,” Whigham says, “public life at court had come under a new and rhetorical imperative of performance. *Esse sequitur operare*: identity was to be derived from behavior. Ruling-class status, desired and performed alike, had become not a matter of being

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<sup>21</sup> Richard Flecknoe, *A Short Discourse of the English Stage* (London, 1664), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Holcomb, *Mirth Making: The Rhetorical Discourse on Jest in Early Modern England*; F. Whigham, “Interpretation at Court: Courtesy and the Performer-Audience Dialectic,” *New Literary History* 14, no. 3 (1983): 623-39; Freitas, “Singing and Playing: The Italian Cantata and the Rage for Wit.”; S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980); Brown, “Jesting Rights: Women Players in the Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange.”; L. Macy, “Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal,” *The Journal of Musicology* XIV, no. 1 (1996); Keith Thomas, “The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England,” *TLS* (1977).

but of doing, and so of *showing*.”<sup>23</sup> Castiglione’s courtier is advised, in Thomas Hoby’s English translation of 1561, to “accompanye all his mocion wyth a certayne good judgemente and grace, yf he wyll deserve that generall favor which is so much set by.”<sup>24</sup> This “generall favor,” of course, is the courtly identity that Castiglione’s manual offers those who adopt its directives of self-presentation. Chris Holcomb points out that one essential feature of this aristocratic performance is “publicke conversation,” through which the potential courtier displays facility (Castiglione’s *sprezzatura*) with language and social protocol.<sup>25</sup> “[A] certaine wittie and readie pleasantnesse,” reads the 1581 English translation of Stefano Guazzo’s *Civile Conversation*, is “very necessary in Conversation.”<sup>26</sup> Wit served to distinguish, at least in part, the performative aspects of conversation that most effectively manifested a noble self, the “spirit and quintessence” of the interaction. In this frame, wit is less an attention to “unexpected similitude” and more a strategy for the fashioning of an aristocratic identity, part of the “representation of one’s nature or intention in speech or actions,” to quote Greenblatt.<sup>27</sup> In his preface to *Gondibert*, William D’Avenant described wit as “a Webb consisting of the subt’lest threds; and like that of the Spider is considerably woven out of our selves.”<sup>28</sup> This characterization suggests wit’s role in acts of performative self-fashioning (“woven out of our selves”) and evokes, for my purposes, consort music’s polyphonic weaving of witty aristocratic identities.

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<sup>23</sup> Whigham, “Interpretation at Court: Courtesy and the Performer-Audience Dialectic,” 625.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Holcomb, *Mirth Making: The Rhetorical Discourse on Jest in Early Modern England*, 66.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>27</sup> Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> William D’Avenant, *A Discourse Upon Gondibert* (London, 1650), 44.

The Italian writings on courtesy above were imported to England during the second half of the sixteenth century alongside the madrigal, which peaked in popularity there in the decades surrounding 1600.<sup>29</sup> The importance of witty conversation to aristocratic self-presentation described by Castiglione and Guazzo is readily apparent in the Italian madrigal, and I believe that that genre's characteristic use of wit is a central, if overlooked, part of consort music's inheritance.<sup>30</sup> Laura Macy argues that madrigals "had all the necessary features for the teaching of gracious wit." "Their texts," she writes "were a resource of conceits and clever phrases to be memorized, used, and incorporated into future conversations."<sup>31</sup> The poetry of Petrarch, Bembo, Tasso, Guarini, and other poets popular with the composers of madrigals certainly enshrined the "wittie and readie pleasantnesse" advocated by Guazzo. But, importantly for my discussion of instrumental music, the "gracious wit" that Macy argues was taught by madrigal singing was not limited to its texts. "Madrigal singing is itself an activity that requires the kind of self-discipline that was at the heart of social grace. Singing, especially part singing, requires concentration and adherence to a set of strict rules."<sup>32</sup> Wit thrived in the cultivated atmosphere of aristocratic sociality (such as the rooms of the Duchess of Urbino, Elisebetta Gonzaga, as portrayed by Castiglione, or the Le Strange music room at Hunstanton), an environment that required disciplined attention to the rules of

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<sup>29</sup> L. Hamessley, "The Reception of the Italian Madrigal in England: A Repertorial Study of Manuscript Anthologies ca. 1580-1620" (University of Minnesota, 1989); J. Kerman, *The Elizabethan Madrigal; a Comparative Study* (New York: American Musicological Society; distributor: Galaxy Music Corp. New York, 1962).

<sup>30</sup> The influence of the Italian madrigal on English consort music has been well documented. See D.N. Bertenshaw, "The influence of the late sixteenth-century Italian polyphonic madrigal on the English viol consort fantasy c.1600-1645" (University of Leicester, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> Macy, "Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal," 7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

etiquette. Macy suggests that madrigal singing modeled the “concentration and adherence to a set of strict rules” of aristocratic sociality: this claim can be extended to the playing of consort music, a tradition that was self-consciously modeled on madrigal singing. The key difference is that wit in the madrigal is largely a poetic phenomenon, dependent on the ways that the meanings of words interact dynamically with each other and with the non-semantic “meanings” of the music. Consort music presents a fascinating environment in which to observe wit because it offers a model of the interactive aristocratic sociality in which wit thrived but without the semantic framework of spoken language through which wit was typically expressed.

### **The Rhetoric of “Instrumental” Wit**

Witty utterances, whether in the spoken language of Guazzo’s “pleasant conversation” or the instrumental musical discourse of consort music, *do something*—they redirect the flow of the exchange and/or call attention to the rules that govern it. Inasmuch as wit has the capacity to cause particular conversational effects, it falls under the early modern rubric of rhetoric, the persuasive use of language. Wit in consort music, in other words, is “instrumental.” It influences the trajectory of the composition in such a way as to offer a particular experience of rhetorical agency on the part of the player.

Rhetoric deeply informed early modern English musical thought.<sup>33</sup>

Christopher Field, in his excellent study of the use of rhetorical features in Lawes' fantasia suites, notes that "as part of the trivium, rhetoric was a staple ingredient of education, and the habits it inculcated permeated intellectual thought...Oratory's power over the affections, and its concern for good formal disposition, gave it common ground with music in an age when musicians were greatly interested in the moving of the affections, new declamatory styles and the wordless eloquence of bowed stringed instruments."<sup>34</sup> Writers on rhetoric and music alike drew comparisons between the affective and persuasive powers of language and music. The most common register of comparison between music and rhetoric noted the analogous functions of specific musical and rhetorical figures. Henry Peacham's (1576 - 1643) famous statement in *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622) can be taken as representative of this familiar line of thinking.

Yea, in my opinion no rhetoric more persuadeth or hath greater  
power over the mind [than music]; nay, hath not music her figures,  
the same which rhetoric? What is a revert but her *antistrophe*? her  
reports, but sweet *anaphoras*? her counterchange of points,

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<sup>33</sup> G.G. Butler, "Music and Rhetoric in Early Seventeenth-Century English Sources," *The Musical Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (1980): 53-64; C. Field, "Formality and Rhetoric in English Fantasia-Suites," in *William Lawes (1602-1645): essays on his life, times, and work*, ed. A. Ashbee (Aldershot, England; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998); M.R. Maniates, "Music and Rhetoric: Facets of Cultural History in the Renaissance and Baroque," *Israel Studies in Musicology* 3 (1983): 44-69; Robin Headlam Wells, "The Ladder of Love: Verbal and Musical Rhetoric in the Elizabethan Lute-Song," *Early Music* 12, no. 2 (1984): 173-189; Borgerding, "Preachers, 'Pronunciatio,' and Music: Hearing Rhetoric in Renaissance Sacred Polyphony."

<sup>34</sup> Field, "Formality and Rhetoric in English Fantasia-Suites," 234.

*antimetaboles*? her passionate airs, but *prosopopoeias*? with infinite other of the same nature.<sup>35</sup>

*Antistrophe* is the reversal of word order to produce a contrary meaning, as in “all for one and one for all.” A revert, according to Morley, is “when a point is made rising or falling, and then turned to go the contrarie waie, as manie notes as it did ye first,” what modern theorists refer to as melodic inversion.<sup>36</sup> Peacham’s comparison here is not “literally exact,” as Gregory Butler notes, “for in the one case inversion is horizontal and in the other, vertical.”<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless it serves to typify this early modern approach to reconciling music and language. In his exhaustive essay on the convergence of rhetoric and music in seventeenth-century English sources, Butler traces each of the rhetorical figures Peacham names above back to English treatises on rhetoric and forward to their use as musico-theoretical concepts by theorists like Morley. Field’s essay, mentioned above, draws specific parallels between Lawes’ use of these and other rhetorical figures in the text settings of his vocal music and the composer’s similar use of musical figures in his purely instrumental fantasia suites.

But Mishtooni Bose has advocated caution about an uncritical acceptance of statements such as Peacham’s, arguing that while rhetorical terminology might have provided an “aesthetic vocabulary, a critical language with which to discuss musical

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<sup>35</sup> H. Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (London, 1622), 337. Peacham, whose father published the influential treatise on rhetoric *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593) provides another useful point of connection between rhetoric and the “wordless eloquence” of the consort tradition. Earlier in *The Compleat Gentleman* Peacham states one goal of his courtesy manual (p98): “I desire no more in you than to sing your part sure, and at the first sight, withall, to play the same upon your Violl...”

<sup>36</sup> T. Morley, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (London, 1597), 85.

<sup>37</sup> Butler notes that “the exact musical parallel of inversion of word order would be *retrogradation*, which Morley calls *retort*.” Butler, “Music and Rhetoric in Early Seventeenth-Century English Sources,” 58.



affectivity...the rules of rhetoric cannot also provide reliable material for the formulation of an authentic theory of production.”<sup>38</sup> Bose, who addresses this corrective primarily to scholars of vocal music, seems to run afoul here of a musical species of the “intentional fallacy” and in so doing misses the point of work that seeks to understand the direct and indirect mutual influences of rhetoric and music.<sup>39</sup> Unlike scholarship that seeks in rhetoric “an authentic theory of production,” or, relatedly, an explanation for the formal characteristics of Renaissance music, I invoke rhetoric here instead as a habit of mind familiar to composers, players and listeners of consort music, as a set of competencies and expectations active in the domains both of reception and production.<sup>40</sup>

My argument about wit as a performative mode of sociality draws on the idea that rhetorical figures were understood as instrumental, as being used to accomplish specific persuasive goals. Henry Peacham the elder (1546 – 1634)—the father of the author of *The Compleat Gentleman*—defines the figure of epiphora, for example, by describing the effect on listeners that one can expect to achieve through its use.

Epiphora is a figure which endeth diverse members or clauses still  
with one and the same word. An example: Since the time that concord  
was taken from the citie, libertie was taken away, fidelitie was taken

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<sup>38</sup> M. Bose, “Humanism, English Music and the Rhetoric of Criticism,” *Music and Letters* 77, no. 1 (1996): 21.

<sup>39</sup> For another cautious account of rhetoric in Renaissance music, see Brian Vickers, “Figures of rhetoric/Figures of music?,” *A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 2, no. 1 (1984): 1-44.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Maniates, “Music and Rhetoric: Facets of Cultural History in the Renaissance and Baroque.”; M.E. Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

away, friendship was taken way...[I]t serveth to leave a word of importance in the ende of a sentence, that it may the longer hold the sound in the mind of the hearer.<sup>41</sup>

Epiphora is a tool of persuasion here because it lodges the sound, and meaning, of a key word in “the mind of the hearer.” Rhetorical figures were catalogued by classical and Renaissance writers according to the specific ways that they succeeded in affecting those who heard them. While theorists of rhetoric, then and now, have focused on the ways that rhetorical figures can serve as building blocks of oratory or persuasive writing, I am interested in their instrumental capacity—the notion that utterances, linguistic or musical, can “do” things. It is precisely this “perlocutionary” capacity of utterance that draws together rhetoric and wit. Wit is rhetorical inasmuch as witty utterances are instrumental—wit positions the speaker in particular ways in the social and linguistic space he or she occupies. Mr. Saunders’ witty rejoinder to the gossips in Jenkins jest served to silence their “wanton tongues.” A witty remark or response can deflect or derail competing claims to aristocratic privilege and earn Castiglione’s coveted “general favor.” Holcomb catalogues a half-dozen “jesting figures” in the rhetoric and style manuals of the period that “are to be included among the orator’s, courtier’s, and poet’s repertoire of rhetorical strategies.”<sup>42</sup>

Of course, the power of rhetorical figures to have specific effects on listeners operates not just in the domain of oratory or poetry but also in conversation.

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<sup>41</sup> H. Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1593), 42.

<sup>42</sup> Holcomb, *Mirth Making: The Rhetorical Discourse on Jest in Early Modern England*, 18.

Rhetoric provided the dominant theoretical framework for verbal interaction primarily through its enumeration of the “instrumental” capacity of language as isolated in rhetorical figures.

Peacham senior’s *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593, quoted above) and George Puttenham’s *The Arte of English Poesy* (1589) are just two of numerous treatises containing long lists of rhetorical figures with their suasive uses. In his reading of courtesy and rhetoric manuals, Holcomb describes the ways that early modern writers advocated the deployment of rhetorical strategies in the cultivation of a courtly identity.<sup>43</sup> The “pleasant conversation” to which Guazzo alludes would have been a key site for such cultivation. Consort music, I argue, was another. “Conversation,” as we see staged in Jenkins’ jest, served early modern consort players as a useful and even familiar model for instrumental chamber music. Accounts by gentleman amateur viol players such as Mace, Marsh, Wood, Pepys, and Dudley and Roger North, liken consort music to conversation. Mace’s famous description of “Fancies of 3, 4, 5, and 6 Parts to the Organ, Interpos’d (now and then) with some Pavins, Allmaines, Solemn, and Sweet Delightful Ayres; all which were (as it were) so many Pathettical Stories, Rhetorical Stories, Rhetorical, and Sublime Discourses; Subtil, and Accute Argumentations” is perhaps the most explicit in this regard.<sup>44</sup>

Lawes 5-part fantasy in C major (VdGS 81) offers characteristic examples of “rhetorical” partwriting. The fantasy, the first piece of a “sett” that includes a pavan

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>44</sup> Mace, T., *Musick's Monument*. 1676, London. 234. see also Marsh’s diary, in which he apologizes for time spent in the “vain conversation” of consort music R. Gillespie, *Scholar Bishop: the recollections and diary of Narcissus Marsh, 1638-1696* (Cork: Cork University Press/Gillespie, R., 2003), 20.

and aire, appears in several manuscript collections including the Shirley partbooks mentioned above, and dates to the late 1630s.<sup>45</sup> Individual parts are composed so as to conspicuously affect the progress of the ensemble, instigating harmonic and textural changes readily perceptible to the players. To the extent that playing consort music is experienced as social interaction, as “pleasant conversation,” these compositional gambits in individual parts allow their players to enjoy a sense of rhetorical agency, a sense of wittily directing the flow of the interaction.

### **Lawes' C-major Fantasy, VdGS 81**

In his monograph on Lawes' consort music, David Pinto evocatively details the “headlong lemming rush” of the fantasy's first point.<sup>46</sup> I will begin my analysis where his trails off at the cadence that concludes this episode. Measure 10 presents the first structural articulation of the fantasia, an energetic confirmation of C major whose resolution is elided by the bass and tenor II, which continue with a descending string of interlocking C-major arpeggios (see figure 4). This new figure retains the distinctive octave of the head point and concludes, after several minims worth of crotchet leaps in C major, with an eight-quaver “tail” (see figure 5).<sup>47</sup> These eight quavers, each one separated from its neighbor by at least a third and as much as an octave, offer the energy of the division-style writing for which Lawes is often been noted. It is a figure to anticipate with eagerness and/or trepidation as it

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<sup>45</sup> For a detailed account of the manuscript origins of Lawes consort music for 5 and 6 viols, see G. Dodd and A. Ashbee, “Thematic Index of Music for Viols, 2nd Edition”, 2004, “William Lawes.”

<sup>46</sup> Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes*, 93.

<sup>47</sup> Pinto evocatively describes this feature as “a flagellum of arpeggiated quavers” in *Ibid.*, 83.

approaches on the page, its novelty and frenetic character evident even in its notation. Requiring some quick, technically tricky string crossings, these eight quavers reward their executor with crisp articulations and the satisfaction of realizing, through leaping pointillism, two simultaneous polyphonic parts on one instrument. The figure proves too tasty to leave as simply the termination of the previous point but, as a clever neologism will leap from mouth to admiring mouth in conversation, is repeated and drawn out into strings of interlocking quaver thirds over the following measures. The bass, cast again in the role of the rake that we saw in VdGS 337, insists on the last word here by pushing the figure past its breaking point—after twelve quaver leaps of nearly an octave it shimmies up a ladder of interlocking melodic thirds (see figure 6). The remaining voices of the ensemble, now moving in acquiescent scalar crotchets, are driven upwards until treble I abruptly arrests the diatonic ascent of the bass with an F sharp minim (figure 6, m. 19), channeling the motion of the ensemble into a broad cadential preparation for a tonicization of the fifth, G.



Figure 16. William Lawes C-major fantasia (VdGS 81) mm. 9-12 with bass duet<sup>48</sup>

This musical score shows measures 13 through 16 of William Lawes's C-major fantasia. The notation is consistent with Figure 16. Measure 13 is marked with a box containing the number 15. A grey rectangular highlight covers the bottom two staves (Tenor and Bass) from measure 13 to measure 16, indicating the 'eight-quaver' tail.

Figure 17. William Lawes C-major fantasia (VdGS 81) mm. 13-16 with "eight-quaver" tail<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> W. Lawes, *William Lawes Consort Sets in Five and Six Parts*, ed. D. Pinto (London: Faber Music Unlimited, 1979), 45.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.



oblige with three crotchet pickups to the second semibreve of measure 20, the C chord that logically follows the first-inversion G. But now treble II asserts an exasperated pathos, proffering an E flat (m. 20), the flattened version of the expected major third of C, a move that lurches the entire texture towards a chromatically-inflected G minor. The bass, seemingly always ready to exaggerate the tendencies of the other voices, increases both the chromaticism and flatward drift of the passage with a two-measure descent from G by chromatic semitone (mm. 21-22). This melodramatically conjures G minor's association with chromatic tragedy and delivers the ensemble to a transitional stretto in D that peters out into a deceptive cadence in measure 29.<sup>52</sup>

This is an appealing passage to play because each unexpected or exaggerated transition seems to result from a specific, identifiable musical utterance. The player whose part is responsible for these shifts in harmony and/or texture, such as treble I when she introduces an F sharp to check to the bass's runaway ascent in measure 19, enjoys the sense that she has influenced the course of the musical discourse. Here, the F sharp can feel playfully oppositional, a successful diversionary tactic against the rambunctiousness of the bass, like an artfully introduced change of subject calculated to reign in a speaker who is boorishly dominating a conversation (think Queen Getrude to Polonius). These musical utterances are rhetorical not so much because they advance the larger affective project of the composer (though certainly such a hearing is possible), but rather because they have specific, targeted effects on the unfolding of the composition. They offer an experience of rhetorical

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<sup>52</sup> Purcell's setting of Dido's lament and Farrant's "Ah, alas you salt sea gods," discussed in my chapter on melancholy, are two better known examples.



agency to their players who, like the other members of the ensemble, are aware of the divergence from expected compositional trajectory. Each of the musical figures above diverts the flow of VdGS 81 from its conventionalized course. Familiarity with consort music includes, of course, assumptions about how fantasias “normally” proceed. These include expectations about how a new point will proliferate through the texture or the conventionalized introduction of mode-shifting pitches, a process that later eras of music theory refer to as “modulation.” Lawes’ partwriting here subverts these expectations, as in the case of Treble II’s surprise E flat, and capitalizes on the capacity of a single voice to redirect the progress of the composition. Treble I’s F sharp, for example, doesn’t so much come as a surprise (tonicization of the “dominant” would be expected here), but is nevertheless experienced as a “change of direction” attributable to the musical/social entity called “treble I.”

In either case, the partwriting exhibits a rhetorical, perlocutionary function that can feel as if it originates in the utterer, the player. While it is impossible to make provable claims about the musical experience of early modern consort players, I contend that the pervasive awareness of the instrumental capacity of language under the rubric of rhetoric, combined with a conception of consort music as conversation, makes such a reading coherent. It also offers one account of the witty charm of Lawes’ consort music. Robert Boyle’s description of the pleasure of wit could easily be applied to the playful redirections of Lawes’ partwriting.

[Wit]...enables him oftentimes to surprise his Hearers; and...such a kind of surprise is one of the most endearing Circumstances of the productions of Wit.<sup>53</sup>

VdGS 81 offers its players numerous opportunities to “endear” themselves to the other members of the ensemble by performing the tricks of voice leading in their parts. A conventional mythology of the genre, I believe, holds that the “quick ranging of mind” that such figures demonstrate are ascribed as much (or more) to their executors as to the composer in the moment of their performance. Consort music, as Dudley North enthused, “satisfie[s] both quickness of heart and hand.”<sup>54</sup>

The partwriting gambits of Lawes’ C-major fantasia are notable, ultimately, for the ways that they constitute a relationship between an individual player and the corporation of the ensemble. It is axiomatic that selves are fashioned in relation to society, that the “social actions” constitutive of selfhood “are themselves always embedded in systems of public signification.”<sup>55</sup> In the case of consort music the self that emerges as both part of and apart from the quorum of other players is mapped by one voice in a polyphonic matrix. “Society” is both the contrapuntal machinations of the polyphony as well as the community of players who sit together to enact them. Greenblatt’s “systems of public signification” include both the musical conventions of the genre with their underlying rhetorical principles, and the “rules” of aristocratic sociality as described by writers like Castiglione and Peacham.

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<sup>53</sup> Robert Boyle *Occasional Reflections* (1665) 37, quoted in Ustick and Hudson, “Wit, ‘Mixt Wit,’ and the Bee in Amber,” 110.

<sup>54</sup> D. North, *A Forest Promiscuous of Several Seasons Productions* (London, 1659), 323.

<sup>55</sup> Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 5.

James Haar alludes to this dynamic relationship between the self and the group in his work on the madrigal. The development of a madrigal style that featured “textual as well as musical contrast...in the presentation of the poetry” made possible “verbal as well as musical counterpoint..., a song may [have] come to represent not just a straight-forward declamation of text but a ruminative, many-layered reading of it.”<sup>56</sup> While Haar is specifically concerned here with the ways that the madrigal developed possibilities for the interrelationship of text and music, he is also attendant to the effects of this interrelationship on the experience of singers. “Singers now think, and perhaps always thought, of the part they sing as *their* version of the song” [italics mine].<sup>57</sup> The sharing of thematic material among voices in consort music, such as the tricky eight-quaver figure in VdGS 81, engender similar claims on the part of the players. To utter a musical phrase that is recognizably the same as that uttered by those around you, yet distinguished by details of execution, timbre, and polyphonic context, is to recognize a “self” among others. Wit inflects this process, insuring that the “self” produced through iteration bears the desired markers of aristocratic identity.

Susan McClary is similarly interested in the madrigal as a vehicle for the experience of subjectivity, though the “self” that she see produced by madrigal singing is not that of the performers or composer but rather that of the poem’s narrator, a representative of “a new cultural agenda that sought to perform dynamic

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<sup>56</sup> J. Haar, *Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 56.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

representations of complex subjective states.”<sup>58</sup> McClary demonstrates sixteenth-century composers’ use of modality as a musical technology to represent a fractured and contradictory experience of subjectivity. However, her work prioritizes the musical *representation* of a narratorial subjectivity over the experiences of the individual musicians that cooperatively instantiate it. My analyses here reverse this priority, foregrounding instead the experience of musical subjectivit(ies) offered to individual performers.

### Wit and Rules

Wit, like polyphony, is both centripetal and centrifugal—though individuating it reasserts the coherence of community. A witty remark may call attention to “unexpected similitude,” may disrupt the normal patterns of semantics and perception, but its net effect is to reinforce the communal conventions of the sharing of meaning. If wit can bring an aspiring gentleman into the privileged circle of courtliness, it is by simultaneously marking him as outside *and* inside, as distinguishing his “quick ranging of mind” and speech but also his sense of propriety in its use. Consort music, a practice governed by rules of harmony and decorum, invited witty intervention. Lawes was particularly adept at subverting compositional conventions, offering those that played his music myriad opportunities to “play the wit,” to perform wittiness by executing his challenging and eccentric points and clever musical redirections. The measures of the C-major

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<sup>58</sup> S. McClary, *Modal subjectivities: self-fashioning in the Italian madrigal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 16.

fantasy discussed above are exciting to play in part because of the ways that nearly every voice manages to frustrate expectations of motivic development and cadence.

If one register of Lawes' wit was attention to such expectations, then the syntax of his partwriting reveals another. In a rare bit of contemporaneous music criticism, the seventeenth-century antiquary and consort player Anthony Wood remarked that Lawes "broke sometimes the rules of mathematicall composition."<sup>59</sup> The composer is known among modern consort players for his erratic partwriting and unconventional use of chromaticism. Scholars have noted, for example, Lawes' use of what modern theory calls a first-inversion augmented dominant chord, the result of substituting the minor third scale degree for the second scale degree in a triad rooted on the fifth of the key (see figure 7).<sup>60</sup> Lefkowitz catalogues other transgressions in Lawes' consort writing, "breaks" that form a familiar part of the modern Lawes criticism. "Large melodic leaps occur often. Intervals ranging from sixths to as much as two octaves are not unusual. Melodic and harmonic resolutions are ignored in a succession of wide skips in the same direction. The parts often cross and re-cross each other in pursuance of a full melodic compass, and this without regard to the resolution of dissonances which may be left incomplete or inconspicuously resolved in other voices."<sup>61</sup> Pinto sees in Lawes' partwriting an "unconcealed impatience" with the orthodoxies of counterpoint. I would add that, like Monteverdi (to whom Lawes is frequently compared), Lawes' musico-

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<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Lefkowitz, *William Lawes*, 6.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Davenport, "The Dances and Aires of William Lawes (1602-1645): Context and Style," 58; Lefkowitz, *William Lawes*, 63-5. Lefkowitz uses the fantasia a 6 from the g-minor suite—see p65 of the Fretwork edition, m. 42.

<sup>61</sup> Lefkowitz, *William Lawes*, 51.

syntactical liberties represented a shift of priorities towards the social and rhetorical functions of his music.<sup>62</sup>



Figure 19. William Lawes g-minor fantasia (VdGS 85) showing a 1<sup>st</sup>-inversion augmented dominant chord.<sup>63</sup>

Lawes' penchant for chromaticism in his minor-mode consort music, as Lefkowitz and Pinto have noted, is largely the result of his profligate use of all of the possible inflections of the sixth and seventh scale degrees, a procedure that doesn't technically violate received rules of voice leading as long as each inflection occurs properly in its own part.<sup>64</sup> But there are instances where Lawes introduces points that would have set the corrective quill of his teacher Coprario skittering across the page. One such example makes an appearance in the second fantasy (VdGS 72) of

<sup>62</sup> Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes*, 79.

<sup>63</sup> Lawes, *William Lawes Consort Sets in Five and Six Parts*, 65.

<sup>64</sup> Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes*, 79; Lefkowitz, *William Lawes*, 74.

the five-part sett in A minor, likely composed in the late 1630s as part of a group of pieces that included the C-major fantasia (VdGS 81) discussed above.<sup>65</sup>

### Lawes' a-minor Fantasy, VdGS 72

VdGS 72 opens with the two lowest voices careening through the twisting melodic thirds of Lawes' long opening point. After a close on the third, C, in measure 4, the three upper voices respond with closely-space entrances—treble II and tenor I repeat the opening point in parallel thirds just a crotchet behind treble I. The phrygian cadence on the fifth, E, that ends this episode sets the stage for the point in question, a figure comprised of four ascending semitones in crotchets (see figure 8). The bass, now alone, makes the first statement of this motive in the second half of measure 9. The tenors answer—also unaccompanied—their entrances separated by two crotchets and the interval of a fifth. Finally the trebles get their solo moment with the peculiar point, treble I beginning on B and ascending only one semitone before “correcting” the motive with two subsequent whole steps while treble II begins on F sharp and ascends chromatically home to A. Modal theory as articulated by Morley, Campion, and Coprario allows for the melodic raising and lowering of the sixth and seventh scale degrees, a practice that frequently results in cross relations in a multipart texture. However, such theory cannot account for the consecutive ascending semitones of Lawes' point. Descent by semitone is permissible because it can be theorized as a string of locally occurring voice-leading gambits, particularly

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<sup>65</sup> Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes*, 70.

when the chromatic line is in the bass. But Lawes provides no such cover for his melodic malapropism here, leaving it to disturb the quiet expectation following the half cadence on E like an audibly whispered bit of slander.

Figure 20. William Lawes a-minor fantasia (VdGS 72) showing the peculiar chromatic point.<sup>66</sup>

And like a delicious bit of slander or a clever neologism, Lawes' chromatic point cries out for repetition. There is pleasure in this motive's transgression of modal syntax, and the imitative conventions of consort music assure that each player will get a turn to utter it. In a fantasia the introduction of new points typically occurs at moments of structural transition and thus requires heightened attention to the corporation of the ensemble by its members. How will the new point mesh with the established pulse? How will it be articulated by the player who introduces it? How closely spaced in time are the entrances, and what particular challenges of rhythmic subdivision and ensemble will the ensuing episode present? The sense of

<sup>66</sup> Lawes, *William Lawes Consort Sets in Five and Six Parts*, 17.



anticipation, of alertness and comparative tension with which a consort greets a new point, is primed for witty disruption. Lawes' novel figure, instantly recognizable as contravening established modal conventions and first presented unaccompanied in its entirety, is easily read as witty. Pinto characterizes the point as "ominous," an interpretation that recognizes its modal transgression and offers, perhaps, the pleasure of suspense.<sup>67</sup> My goal here is to present wit as a compelling cultural resource for the experience of particular stylistic features of Lawes' consort music without foreclosing alternate interpretations.

Lawes' four chromatic crotchets are, perhaps unsurprisingly, introduced by the bass. The lowest voice in a fantasia texture carries a disproportionately large share of harmonic information, and thus the player of that part often acts as the harmonic "steersman" of the ensemble, telegraphing cadences and supervising moments of structural transition. As we've seen in VdGS 37 and 81 above, Lawes' bass parts are the usual suspects in many moments of musical redirection and frustration of expectation in the consort music. It is sensible to imagine the composer electing to play this part in a seventeenth-century playing session because the ensemble would best be served by his professional experience as well as his intimate knowledge of the particular harmonic and structural "moves" of the music at hand. Pinto points out that Lawes likely performed his own music with his colleagues in the Private Music of Charles I, and suggests the possibility that "it was their *esprit de corps* that sustained his output."<sup>68</sup> If Lawes did compose the bass parts of his consort music with the expectation that he himself would play them,

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<sup>67</sup> Pinto, *For ye Violls: The consort and dance music of William Lawes*, 80.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

then the individuating capacity of witty utterance suggests that the composer has left a unique “trace” of himself in his partwriting. Lawes’ bass lines, perhaps, offer a modern consort player a strangely ventriloquial experience of witty intervention, of mouthing the words of long forgotten jests.<sup>69</sup>

If the bass part is the first to “break” the rule of modal syntax in this instance, the top treble part has the distinction of “marking” that break, according to Purdie’s schema of joking described above. After the initial statement on E of the chromatic point by the bass, the three middle voices present literal imitations of the four chromatic crotchets, transposed conventionally so as to begin up a fifth on B and a fifth above that on F sharp. Treble I, however, begins the motive on B and climbs diatonically, rather than chromatically, ascending two whole steps to an E after the initial semitone between B and C (see figure 8). While Lawes frequently adapts subsequent statements of his points to accommodate voice-leading rules, this alteration seems to stand out as a “correction” of the previous chromaticism. Treble I reminds the rest of the ensemble what a proper use of mode would sound like, performing a reinstatement of the rules of contemporaneous modal practice that can be likened to a wink acknowledging the fleeting “wrongness” of the point. In so doing, however, treble I contravenes another important convention of imitative polyphony, the literal statement of each point by each part. So the treble’s four diatonic, as opposed to chromatic, crotchets can be heard as witty on two counts—as a teasing “correction” of the other parts and as a violation of the convention of

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<sup>69</sup> This interpretation recalls Elisabeth Le Guin’s description, discussed in my Introduction, of the “carnal” experience of performing—as a living cellist (and musicologist)—the music of the long dead cellist Luigi Boccherini.

imitation. By placing these two rules of consort music in conflict with each other, Lawes affects a move that recalls Purdie's description of the mechanics of joking. "The work a joking mechanism performs is to 'trap' the Audience into a situation where their proper activity of 'making sense' inevitably entails producing Symbolic error."<sup>70</sup> Attentive listeners (including, especially, the players) to this episode of VdGS 72 are forced to choose between competing priorities—modal integrity or imitative convention—each of which entails producing an error.

In the conversational moment of consort playing, Treble I's (in)corrected statement of the chromatic motive conveys multiple, nested agencies. The entity I'm calling "Treble I" is a composite, simultaneously a polyphonic schema, a role within an ensemble, a musical and rhetorical persona, a social being enmeshed in the corporation of the consort, and a living, breathing body. This list is not exhaustive, nor does it reflect necessary divisions between categories that may, in fact, blur together. Rather, I enumerate these "parts" of Treble I to suggest how such an entity exists at the nexus of the social and musical, as shaped by and constitutive of the same centripetal and centrifugal forces pulling inward towards the text of the polyphony and outward into the domains of performance, language, and social meaning. Agency permeates this process, and the early modern understanding of wit as integral to the enterprise of aristocratic self-fashioning offers one critical lens through which to understand it. Treble I's alteration of Lawes' witty motive reveals something about her—it is "performative" in its capacity to transmit intention and thus to bear particular meaning about the subjectivity of its performer. Persona and

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<sup>70</sup> Purdie, *Comedy: the mastery of discourse*, 37.

performance are knit together—Lawes’ “corrected” point signifies in its modal and polyphonic context, and its performance by a person surrounded by other people both inflects and partakes of that significance. The point’s friction with the received conventions of melodic theory is a template for the interaction of the players, an interaction in part conditioned by contemporary notions of wit as a mode of (aristocratic) sociality. The details of the “self” that emerges are contingent, of course, on the same range of uncapturable variables that shape any social interaction. Whether, for example, the “correction” is understood as the prim move of a pedant or a comically erratic “misreading” of a complex point or any of innumerable other readings depends on who is playing treble I and how, specifically, he or she executes the figure and who the other players are and what was discussed prior to playing the fantasia etc. etc. In other words, the immediate social context interacts dynamically with the musical conventions of consort music and the culturally entrained patterns of being together in ways that allow the participants to both shape and interpret musical utterances. When made in the context of a governing set of conventions, utterances are constitutive of identity—they are understood as bearing meaning about who the utterer is or thinks himself to be in relation to those governing conventions. In this way, spoken language and the ritual and musical conventions of consort music share a common purpose.

## **Conclusion**

Playing consort music offers particular experiences of sociality and subjectivity. This dissertation seeks to identify some of the cultural resources available to historical subjects as they made meaning of those experiences, as well as interrogate the processes by which modern musical experience can inform musical historiography. Of course, musical experience is historically contingent, but some glimmer of centuries-old ways of being together, of interaction and self-fashioning, remains in the carefully choreographed polyphony of the style. The analyses above are informed by contemporary musical experience, a move that risks the erasure of historical difference, of the very particularities that this species of close reading offers. Yet such erasure exists on a continuum, the other end of which is what Bruce Holsinger has called a “musicology of empathy,” a process that allows scholars and performers to “forge new identifications with those whose musical remains we enliven and study, to invent new ways of merging and blending the musical cultures of our time with the musical cultures of the dead.”<sup>71</sup>

This is a productive model of historiography; a work of reconciliation rather than interrogation. Such a model, a “merging and blending” of historical context and contemporary musical experience, yields a plurality of meanings, not all of them, perhaps, relevant or recognizable to the historical subjects who serve as unwitting accessories to their generation. Gary Tomlinson offers an answer to those who would question the truth value of such plurality, a statement that seems to articulate a good model for work in the humanities generally. “I have aspired to convey meaning more than to prove conclusions...In such an endeavor, claims of certainty,

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<sup>71</sup> B. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 347.

correctness, and truth do not involve positivistic notions of truth. They are—to paraphrase Leo Treitler, a penetrating writer on musical historiography—no more than claims that have provided the most coherent narrative that is consistent with all my data.”<sup>72</sup>

Wit, like consort music, has a contemporary life of its own that registers both affinity with and difference from its historical counterpart. Witty conversation as described by manuals on courtesy and rhetoric and represented onstage and in madrigals is one paradigm of aristocratic sociality that would have been familiar to early modern musicians, professional and amateur. Wit is an attractive model to an historian because it was so widely theorized during the period and thus offers both a wealth of sources and a (perhaps exaggerated) sense of cultural coherence, of aesthetic and intellectual unity and recognizability. The way in which wit was valued, understood, and expressed changed over the course of the seventeenth century, a fact particularly evident in the polemics that each successive generation of poets reserved for the work of the previous generation. But there remain well-documented strands of continuity. Wit as a method of critical engagement with language, as a quality of aristocratic performance, and as a playful quality of interaction seem to endure at least until Pope’s polemics against it at the end of the century.<sup>73</sup> Music offers a perspective on wit less distracted by the denotational capacity of spoken language. Wit in poetry and speech has been recognized primarily in the semantic domain—in terms of the “grateful similes, metaphors, and other tropes...” that Hobbes noted as wit’s home turf. Lawes’ consort music reveals

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<sup>72</sup> Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance*, xi.

<sup>73</sup> Summers, Peabworth, and Peabworth, *The Wit of Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, 1.

wit's schematic, performative, and social aspects, dimensions of it that are harder to discern in the familiar conception of wit as simply language play.

The next chapter pursues a set of connections between music and language that engage similar questions about rhetorical efficacy and the "suasive" capacity of musical sound. Consort music, as I'll show, served as a domestic devotional idiom in an era when the role of spoken language--and music--in prayer was in the process of radical transformation. The change from Latin to English liturgy that marks the upheavals of the Reformation is registered in changes in the consort repertory, a music that I argue is deeply connected to ritual uses of language. The communal structure of the viol consort reveals both the inherited *habitus* of the liturgical polyphony that served as such an important stylistic antecedent as well as changing attitudes about the relationship of the laity to the clergy and the power of individual prayer.

## IV

“In Voice, in Heart, in Hand Agree”<sup>1</sup>: Consort Music, Devotion, and  
“Liturgical *Habitus*”

The historical and cultural gulf that separates modern consort enthusiasts from their early modern counterparts is broadest, perhaps, in the areas of intersection between musical and religious practice. With the exception of occasional performances in church of consort anthems alongside, say, some instrumental music by Byrd or Gibbons, consort music today is seldom enjoyed as a *devotional* practice. Our modern conception of consort playing as a secular, recreational activity obscures the fact that the repertory is intimately connected to the structures and traditions of a tumultuous era of Reformation Christianity. The repertory cannot be understood without recourse to its role in the shifting liturgical and devotional practices of the period. At the same time, the history of the viol consort offers a valuable perspective on the changes in cultural practice—the transformation of religious *habitus*—that were such a central part of the Reformation.

This chapter identifies numerous connections between domestic consort playing, liturgy, and the changing devotional practices of the period, and argues that consort music both preserved something of the Catholic ritual music of previous generations yet advanced Protestant attitudes towards music and prayer. The material ranges from late sixteenth-century consort songs by Thomas Greaves, Giles

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<sup>1</sup> George Wither, quoted in G.L. Finney, “Music: a Book of Knowledge in Renaissance England,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 6 (1959): 43.



Farnaby, and William Byrd through literary treatments of consort anthems in Restoration Cambridge. I also consider instrumental transcriptions of Latin motets, the pedagogical repertory of “plain-song” canons, and the *In nomine*, that most characteristic and puzzlingly archaic form for viol consort. Consort playing preserved what I describe, after Bruce Holsinger, as a “liturgical *habitus*” among its players, an experience of communal music making deeply indebted to the musical practices of the pre-Reformation performers of the Sarum rite. Consort music’s musical language—adapted from the liturgical style forged generations earlier to enact particular relationships between celebrants, the Word, and the divine—maintained, and was in many cases was *understood* to maintain, a connection to archaic ritual. This was true, I argue, not just for those Recusant enthusiasts for whom collecting and playing consort music was one facet of a secret Catholic identity, but for nearly everyone who played an *In nomine* or fantasia composed in the cantus firmus style developed to ornament sacred chant.

Yet consort playing was also progressively appropriated as a Protestant devotional activity, part of the initiative to anchor a Protestant identity in the collective recitation of sacred texts at home that saw numerous publications “...for the recreation of all such as delight in Musicke.”<sup>2</sup> For Protestants, who were never willing to completely cede sacred texts to the inarticulateness of instruments, the viol consort served to accompany the singing of Psalms and devotional poetry in the consort song and anthem. In this context, it engaged debates about the changing relationship between worshipper and priest and the suitability of music,

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<sup>2</sup> William Byrd, *Psalmes, sonets, & songs of sadnes and pietie* (London, 1588).

instrumental and otherwise, in prayer. The chapter closes with a discussion of a circle of clergymen, philosophers and consort players in Restoration Cambridge who enshrined the viol consort as a symbol of an Arcadian past, asserting in prose and song that “Musick is advantagious to good men in the service of God.”<sup>3</sup>

While my broader argument about music for viol consort as a site of changing relationships between music and socially constituted religious feeling will encompass much of the repertory, I will begin with the significant portion of the surviving music that is explicitly devotional. This includes consort songs (for one singer and, typically, four viols) with devotional texts; so-called “consort anthems,” a repertory for solo and choral singers accompanied by viols; motets and anthems originally composed for voices but copied with or without text alongside fantasias and other instrumental consort music in numerous surviving manuscript collections; and untexted “liturgical” cantus firmus settings, such as *In nomines*, Byrd’s various “consort hymns,” and the many canons and consort pieces based on the *Miserere mihi*. These last two categories, instrumental motets and cantus firmus settings, blend somewhat seamlessly into the familiar domain of purely instrumental fantasias that modern consort players think of as the core of the repertory. They thus pose both the biggest challenge and richest opportunity for an interrogation of consort music’s complex relationship with language and prayer. Together, these categories of devotional consort music comprise a significant portion of the extant ensemble music for viols. These four categories of devotional consort music represent a disproportionately high percentage of the total repertory

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<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Ingelo, *Bentivolio and Urania in four bookes*, Early English Books Online (London, 1660), 244.

for viol consort that was printed (as opposed to hand copied into private manuscripts) in the early modern period. This is true especially for the consort song, which—as I discuss in my chapter on melancholy—served as a sort of “public face” for the domestic tradition of playing consorts.

### **The consort song and delegation of devotional voice**

The consort song, initially conceived as an accompaniment to dramatic productions by choristers, installed the viol consort as a staple of private, domestic music making. It engaged the cross currents of changing religious practice and registered contentious doctrinal issues such as the use of a vernacular liturgy, the audibility of the clergy during the Eucharist, and the role of the individual in a Christian society. Consort songs highlight the relationship between the self and the members of the ensemble. A singer introduces an “other” to the viols, a foreign agent into an instrumental cohort predicated on equivalence. The defining feature of a viol consort is its homogeneity. Its matched instruments provide a common musical vocabulary—a kinetic dialect of articulation and musical gesture that undergirds the shared habitus of the players. A singer brings the organic, moist and quavering breath of the voice, a sound that not only threatens to overwhelm the focused austerity of the viols but also proffers the magic of speech denied the instruments. Does the voice simply render with a different brush the polyphony it shares with the viols, or does the vocal line stand out in boldly colored strokes against an instrumental background? In practical terms, who cues whom? Who

tunes to whom? Who establishes the interpretation that governs (or not) the performance of each imitative point? How are issues of balance resolved between an ensemble of viols and a single voice?

These questions are the same ones that each member of a strictly *instrumental* consort encounters as he or she plays polyphonic music. Music for voices and viols emphasizes them by unsettling the ensemble with the introduction of a foreign body—if in a consort song the grain of the voice becomes the pearl of a soaring *mean*, adjustments will need to be made on the parts of the viol players. They will negotiate not only their own relationship to the vocal part, but will attend to—and be affected by—the relationships between the *other* players and the singer. Little of this need be explicit, but musical intelligibility requires it, and the ways in which composers crafted the vocal and instrumental parts in music for voices and viols offers suggestions about how early modern consort players negotiated these issues.

As Philip Brett and others have shown, the consort song (so named only in the twentieth century by Thurston Dart) was initially popularized as an accompaniment to chorister morality plays during the early second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> This repertory survives in part in retrospective manuscript collections, such as the Dow partbooks (GB-Och MSS 984-8), an important source of

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<sup>4</sup> P. Brett, "The English Consort Song, 1570-1625," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 88th Session (62): 73-88; P. Brett and T. Dart, "Songs by William Byrd in Manuscripts at Harvard," *Harvard Library Bulletin* XIV, no. 3 (1960): 343-65; S.M. Morris, "Viol Consorts and Music Education in Elizabethan and Jacobean England (1558-1625)" (Montreal: McGill University, 1986); I. Payne, *The provision and practice of sacred music at Cambridge colleges and selected cathedrals, c. 1547-c. 1646 : a comparative study of the archival evidence* (New York: Garland Pub., 1993); K.E. Smith, "Music for Voices and Viols: A Contextual Study and Critical Performing Edition of Verse Anthems in Christ Church [Oxford] mss 56-60" (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1988).

consort songs dated 1581 but compiled during subsequent decades.<sup>5</sup> Brett identifies a sub-category of these early songs he calls “psalms and spiritual songs,” which includes roughly two dozen examples by Byrd, Wilbye, John Cosyn, and others.<sup>6</sup> In some cases, as in Cosyn’s setting of Psalm 124 “Now Israel may say”, a psalm tune is garlanded by loosely imitative partwriting for viols. Others songs, such as the anonymous setting of the carol “Born is the Babe”, accompany non-biblical devotional texts with instrumental parts that alternate between imitative polyphony and chanson-like homophonic writing.

Though much of the consort song repertory—especially those songs that can be linked to the children’s companies—set amorous or moralizing (as opposed to devotional) texts, the genre as a whole reflects changing religious practices brought about by the Reformation. As Brett notes, the two developments essential to the birth of the consort song—the increasing popularity of the consort of viols and the general acceptance of a simple four-part vocal idiom (as seen in metrical psalm settings)—can be “conveniently associated with the Reformation.”<sup>7</sup> Beginning in the 1560s and continuing through the first decades of the seventeenth century, choristers played viols to aid in their learning of notation and performance of polyphony.<sup>8</sup> This association between choristers, as essential members of the liturgical musical establishment, and the consort song, was particularly strong

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<sup>5</sup> David Mateer, “Oxford, Christ Church Music MSS 984-8: An Index and Commentary,” *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, no. 20 (1986): 1-18.

<sup>6</sup> See Philip Brett, *Consort songs*, vol. 22, *Musica Britannica* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1967); Philip Brett, *Consort songs for voice & viols*, vol. 15, *The Collection Works of William Byrd* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> Brett, “The English Consort Song, 1570-1625,” 75.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Woodfield, *The early history of the viol* (Cambridge University Press, 1984); Morris, “Viol Consorts and Music Education in Elizabethan and Jacobean England (1558-1625).”

during the first flowering of the genre before Byrd. Arkwright noted that the instrumental *In nomine*—the other mainstay of chorister viol-playing which I discuss at length below—could likely have served as a model for the consort song’s “free string writing against a slow-moving cantus firmus.”<sup>9</sup>

The devotional consort song—in which a lone singer animates with speech the wordless utterances of the viols—recalls the Reformation’s preoccupation with the changing relationship between clergy and congregation. In her study of public devotion in early modern England, Ramie Targoff notes that much of what was at stake in the early debates in England about a vernacular liturgy was aurality. “Whereas Protestants sought to break down the auricular barriers between the clergy and the congregation,” she writes, “Catholics insisted that these barriers were actually conducive to a genuine devotional practice.”<sup>10</sup> The staunchly Catholic bishop of Chichester, John Christopherson, for example, feared that worshippers were distracted by a vernacular liturgy. “It is much better for them not to understand the common service of the church,” Christopherson wrote in 1554, “because when they hear others praying in a loud voice, in the language that they understand, they are letted from prayer themselves...”<sup>11</sup> For English Protestants, on the other hand, Targoff argues that “the proper relationship between laity and clergy depends upon an explicit delegation of devotional voice from one body to the

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<sup>9</sup> Brett, “The English Consort Song, 1570-1625,” 80. Three surviving songs, in fact, “Come, Holy Ghost” (“Veni Creator”), “O Lord, of whom I do depend” (“The Humble Suit of a Sinner”) and “O Lord, turn not away” (“The Lamentation of a Sinner”) use the *In nomine* cantus firmus in one of the accompanying instrumental parts.

<sup>10</sup> R. Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 14.

<sup>11</sup> quoted in *Ibid.*, 15.

other; the efficacy of priest's prayers could be measured only by the extent to which the worshippers felt adequately represented."<sup>12</sup>

Targoff's formulation suggests a range of relationships that might endure among a group of viol player "congregants" who accompany the singing of a devotional text by a vocalist "minister." Different composers handled the interaction between the vocal line and the instrumental parts differently, of course, and the extent to which the viol players may have felt "adequately represented" by the persona of the singer would have been shaped numerous factors. Homophonic writing and the sharing of imitative points, for example—the latter an effect that recalls the influence on the consort song of the carol—invite an identification of the viol players with the persona of the singer. On the other hand, the use of a short instrumental introduction before the voice enters (as well as instrumental episodes between vocal phrases) offers an experience of confederacy on the part of the viol players as distinct from the singer. Devotional consort songs, which almost invariably set either psalm texts or poetry in the first person, dramatize the relationship between the ensemble as congregation and the individual singer as bearer of the Word.

Thomas Greaves' "When I behold" (see figure 1), from his *Songs of Sundrie Kinds* (1604), for example, employs these and other musical strategies to draw the viol players into an identification with the persona of the singer. The anonymous poetry, narrated in the voice of a self-reproachful adult, laments the "errors of...youth" and the abnegation of Jesus' "precious bloud." Consort song texts abound

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 26.

in images of piteous grief and the moral precariousness of youth; here Greaves manages to deploy these two characteristic tropes in a *devotional* song.

When I behold my former wandring way  
 & dive into the bottome of my thought  
 and thinke how I have led that soule astray  
 whose safetie with so precious bloud was bought  
 with teares I crye unto the God of truth  
 forgive O Lord, the errors of my youth<sup>13</sup>

Greaves' setting emphasizes the division between ensemble and soloist even as it calls upon the viols to ratify the utterances of the singer, an effect achieved through the strategic use of call-and-response between the voice and instruments. "When I behold" calls on the vocalist to repeat the phrases "& dive," "I crye," and "forgive" multiple times in succession, each repetition separated by a rest during which the viols play. In mm.6-8, for example, the viols answer the singer's repeated statements of "& dive" homophonically, filling each vocal rest with an imitative bowed affirmation (see figure 1). In a gesture characteristic of the genre, the viols strive to emulate the voice, to utter the singer's chastened prayer with a bowed facsimile of each repetition of the word, and they are homophonically united in their failure. Bows may be able to imitate vocal inflection, but the scrape of hair on gut is ultimately as pallid a reflection of speech as man is an imperfect version of the

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Greaves, *Songes of sundrie kindes* (London, 1604).



Divine. As Byrd says in the preface to his 1588 collection of consort songs, “there is not any Musicke of Instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voyces of men.”

# When I behold

Thomas Greaves

Opening point introduced by Bassus,  
imitated by singer (Medius).

Musical score for the first system of "When I behold". The score is written for five voices: Triplex, Medius, Tenor, Contratenor, and Bassus. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Bassus part begins with a melodic phrase that is imitated by the Medius part. The lyrics "When I behold my form - er wan - dring" are written under the Tenor part.

Repeated statements of "& dive"  
answered homophonically by the viols.

Musical score for the second system of "When I behold". The score is written for five voices: Triplex, Medius, Tenor, Contratenor, and Bassus. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics "way, & dive, and dive, and dive, and dive, and dive in-to the bottome, the bottome of my" are written under the Tenor part. The repeated statements of "& dive" are highlighted in the score.

Musical score for the third system of "When I behold". The score is written for five voices: Triplex, Medius, Tenor, Contratenor, and Bassus. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics "thought: and thinke how I have led that soule a-stray, whose safe - tie with so pre - cious" are written under the Tenor part.

The image displays three systems of a musical score for the song "When I behold". Each system consists of five staves: a vocal line (treble clef) and four instrumental lines (three alto/bass clefs and one bass clef). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

**System 16:** The vocal line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "bloud was bought, with teares I crye, I crye, I crye, I crye un - to un - to the".

**System 21:** The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "God of truth, for - give, for - give, for - give for - give O".

**System 26:** The vocal line concludes with the lyrics: "Lord, O Lord O Lord the er - rors of my youth." The system ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to two sharps (F# and C#).

Figure 21. "When I behold", a devotional consort song by Thomas Greaves from *Songes of sundrie kindes* (1604).

Targoff's "delegation of devotional voice" to a member of the clergy by the laity is suggested by the singer's repetition of the bass player's opening point. Here, the instrumental statement *precedes* that of the singer, and the vocal part focuses with language the utterance of the bass viol, recasting melody as a prayer (see figure 1). However, the singer in Greave's consort song is not allowed to rise *too* far above

the congregation of viols. After all, the texted *medius* part lies in the middle of the texture—lower in tessitura than the cantus, or “*triplex*” as Greaves called it—and the composer has crafted the vocal line, which shares motivic material and voice-leading gambits with the viols (see mm.25-8, for example, for a five-part imitative texture that doesn’t favor the vocal line), as an equal participant in the polyphony. The table book format of Greaves’ publication puts the singer right in the fray, jostling for space among the viols (see figure 2). The singer is an elect member of the consort, a first among equals, but not so far removed that the viol players can’t identity with his voice, can’t imagine singing Greaves’ prayer themselves with their bows.

The image shows a facsimile of Thomas Greaves' collection, specifically the 'tablebook' format. It consists of two pages of handwritten musical notation. The top page features a large, ornate initial 'X' and the title 'TRIPLEX'. The bottom page features a large, ornate initial 'M' and the title 'MEDIUS'. The notation is written on five staves, with the vocal line (CANTUS) at the top and the instrumental parts (VIOLIN, VIOLA, VIOLONCELLO, CONTRA TENOR, BASS) below. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

**TRIPLEX**

**MEDIUS.** **X.** Thomas Greaves.

Hen I behold my former wandring way, & diue, and diue, .ii. .ii. & diue into the bottome,  
the bottome of my thought: and thinke how I haue led that foule al tray, whole faerie with so precious blood was  
bought, with teares I crye, .ii. I crye, .ii. vnto the God of truth, forgiue .ii. .ii. forgiue O Lord,  
the errors of my youth.

**BASS.** **CONTRATENOR** **E**

Figure 22. Facsimile of Greaves' collection showing 'tablebook' format.

The consort song, a genre sustained by the dramatic tension offered by the introduction of an elect *other* into an ensemble defined by the equality of its members, flourished at the same time that Reformers worked at “dismantling the divisions between clerical and lay worship, and...creating an increasingly collective model of public prayer.”<sup>14</sup> In this context, devotional consort songs not only allowed for the collective utterance of a prayer by musicians who may have lacked confidence in their singing voices, but offered a space for the exploration of the fraught and changing relationship between worshipper and celebrant.

### **Byrd’s Catholic songs and the domestication of the viol consort**

“When I behold”, published by Greaves in 1604 for performance in the home, was not the first instance of the consort song’s move from the semi-public domain of the stage to the privacy of the domestic music room. Byrd’s devotional consort songs, which in many cases express the composer’s Catholic sympathies, testify to the adoption of the viol consort by aristocratic amateurs with a strong stake in the privacy of their musical activities. In the following paragraphs, I summarize Byrd’s output of Catholic devotional songs and suggest how they contributed to the history of consort music as a private—and often devotional—activity. The distribution of Byrd’s songs in late Tudor and Jacobean manuscripts, as well as the popularity of his prints of 1588, 1605, and 1611, suggest that devotional consort songs became a

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<sup>14</sup> Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England*, 28.

staple of domestic music during the long period of the composer's influential involvement with the form.<sup>15</sup> The largest collection of Byrd's devotional consort songs, *Psalmes, Sonets, & Songs of Sadnes and Piete* (1588), went through four editions and was misleadingly printed with text underlay in all parts. Byrd's "epistle to the reader" explains that these

divers songs, which being originally made for Instruments to expresse the harmonie, and one voyce to pronounce the dittie, are now framed in all parts for voyces to sing the same.<sup>16</sup>

*Psalmes, Sonets & Songs* includes ten psalm settings and seven "songs of sadnes and piety" that set devotional poetry, including the second appearance in print of Henry Walpole's poem "Why do I use", a tribute to the martyred Jesuit priest Edmond Campion. Though Byrd changed two stanzas to avoid possible censure (the poem's first printer lost his ears to Elizabethan censors), English Catholics would have recognized Walpole's poem.<sup>17</sup> Byrd's choice of psalms was similarly coded. Many, such as Psalm 13 "O Lord, how long wilt thou forget", convey the hope for deliverance from oppressive rule.<sup>18</sup> Metrical psalm settings in English were at the heart of the Reformation musical project; in that context Byrd's settings of psalm translations drawn from orthodox sources such as Thomas Sternhold's *Certayne*

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<sup>15</sup> Brett, "The English Consort Song, 1570-1625."; Brett and Dart, "Songs by William Byrd in Manuscripts at Harvard."

<sup>16</sup> William Byrd, *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs (1588)*, ed. P. Brett, vol. 12 (London: Stainer and Bell, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 12:vii.

<sup>18</sup> Byrd, *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs (1588)*, 12:.

*Psalmes* (1549) represent a characteristically sly appropriation of Protestant musical means to oppositional ends (see, for example, his setting of Psalm 15 “O Lord, within thy tabernacle”).<sup>19</sup> Alongside the 1588 collection, Byrd’s *Songs of Sundrie Natures* (1589) contains six devotional pieces for voices and viols, all of which can be designated as consort *anthems*, a genre I discuss below.

*Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets* (1611), not to be mistaken for the composer’s similarly-named collection of 1588, contributes another four pieces for voices and viols with devotional texts, of which two, “Ah silly soul” and “How vain the toils”, are six-part consort songs. Brett has identified twelve devotional consort songs that were never printed (including the famous Christmas song “Out of orient crystal skies”), pieces that often appear in manuscript alongside versions of Byrd’s songs copied from the prints.<sup>20</sup> Based on a study of several such manuscripts, Brett posits a group of copyists working in London whose customers “were among the fairly large number of cultivated Englishmen of this time whose beliefs inclined them to accept the authority of Rome rather than that of Canterbury.”<sup>21</sup> The Catholic gentry was as a group inclined to the patronage and performance of domestic music, a fact with considerable implications, as we’ll see, for the history of consort music.<sup>22</sup>

Byrd’s famous collection of Catholic liturgical music, *Gradualia I* (1605), includes one consort song in Latin. “Adoramus te” sets the versicle and response at the Office

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<sup>19</sup> Brett, *Consort songs for voice & viols*, 15:1.

<sup>20</sup> Brett, *Consort songs for voice & viols*, 15:.

<sup>21</sup> Brett and Dart, “Songs by William Byrd in Manuscripts at Harvard,” 349.

<sup>22</sup> D.C. Price, *Patrons and musicians of the English Renaissance* (Cambridge Eng.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); C. Monson, “Byrd, The Catholics, and the Motet: The Hearing Reopened,” in *Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motet of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. D. Pesce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); J. Kerman, “Music and Politics: The Case of William Byrd (1540-1623),” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 144, no. 3 (2000): 275-287.

of the Holy Cross, one of the “little offices” from the Book of Hours (more on the *Primer* below) that had been such an essential accessory to pre-Reformation English devotional practice.<sup>23</sup> In his detailed discussion of this song, Brett notes that “‘Adoramus te Christe’ was one of the texts that Henry Garnet, Superior of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, recited immediately before he died on the scaffold at St. Paul’s Churchyard on 3 May 1606 for his alleged implication in the Gunpowder plot.”<sup>24</sup> Relevant here is the longstanding relationship between Garnet and Byrd, who was present to welcome Garnet to England in 1586, as well as the surviving accounts of Catholic festal music making in domestic contexts that might have included “Adoramus te” and pieces like it.<sup>25</sup>

The oppositional character of many of Byrd’s consort songs, including “Adoramus te” and “Why do I use”, likely contributed to—and at the very least required—a performance context of amateur, *private* devotion (a “privatt exercise for Gentleman,” as Giles Farnaby would preface his setting of the psalmes for solo voice and viols), rather than the *public* performances of choirboy drama in which the genre had originated.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, this move is an important instance of the little-understood transition that defines the history of consort music in the late sixteenth century—the provenance of ensemble music for viols in the professional establishments of choir schools and children’s companies and its subsequent adoption by aristocratic amateurs. Manuscript evidence reveals that consort music

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<sup>23</sup> William Byrd, *Gradualia I (1605) All Saints and Corpus Christi*, ed. P. Brett, vol. 6 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1991), viii.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:ix.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; Price, *Patrons and musicians of the English Renaissance*, 156; L.M. Ruff and A.D. Wilson, “The Madrigal, the Lute Song and Elizabethan Politics,” *Past and Present* 44 (1969): 3-51.

<sup>26</sup> G. Farnaby, “The psalms of David: to fower parts, for viols and voyce”, 1625.



was collected and played in aristocratic households as early as the 1570s (the magisterial and oft-mentioned BL-MS Add. 31390, for example, bears the date 1578), and that choristers were trained to play viols as late as the 1630s, when the Winchester statutes required the master to train choristers “in playing cunningly upon instruments [(presumably viols)] of music.”<sup>27</sup>

Thus music for viol consort existed in both locations—the aristocratic country house and the choir school classroom—for a significant part of its history, a fact that is central, I believe, to explaining the richness of the repertory. Devotional consort songs represent an important and visible early link between these domains. The addition of devotional—or even, in the case of Byrd, coded—lyrics to the consort song was an adaptation that signaled the wider appropriation of music for voices and viols from the stage to private musical gatherings. Byrd’s publications of consort songs contain many examples whose lyrics would have made them appropriate to the stage (though only a handful of his consort songs can be linked to particular plays). His “Catholic” songs, however, demonstrate the extent to which he envisioned the devotional consort song as a genre to be enjoyed in the privacy of the home, a pattern that dovetailed with the rise in popularity during the same period of publications of psalms and sacred songs for domestic consumption.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in P. Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 144. See also I. Woodfield, *The early history of the viol* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

<sup>28</sup> See Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549-1660*, 403. for a list of printed books containing devotional music.

### The “liturgical” origins of the consort repertory

The surviving manuscript sources of *purely* instrumental music for viol consort divide roughly into three categories of composition: Latin motets and masses (and with lesser frequency English anthems), typically copied without text for instrumental performance; Italian and English madrigals copied with and without text; and instrumental fantasias, dances, and cantus firmus settings (such as the *In nomine*). This last category comprises the instrumental consort music that modern consort players tend to think of as the core of the repertory and manifests the competing stylistic influences of the other two. Jacobean fantasias by Ferrabosco II, Gibbons and Lupo, for example, reveal the madrigal’s quick changes of motive and playful interaction of voices at the same time that they partake of the rigorous counterpoint and soaring lines of English liturgical polyphony. But, as I argue throughout this dissertation, details of musical style in consort music are closely tied to patterns of social interaction and *habitus*—patterns that I suggest were actually *sought* in the genre by enthusiasts. The *musical* markers of Latin liturgical music persist in consort music in the form of actual motets and masses transcribed as part of the consort repertory, in the influence of the liturgical style on “purely” instrumental consort music, and in the surviving pedagogical materials related to its composition and performance. However, these musical influences do not only—or simply—represent the appropriation of a traditional vocabulary to a new idiom (as composers were forced to respond to the sweeping changes of the Reformation), but

rather brought with them a range of long-held values about musical experience and meaning.

The remarkable continuity between Latin liturgical music and the repertory for viol consort can be glimpsed in the story of Byrd's fantasia number I à 6 (according to Kenneth Elliott's numbering in the Collected Works). The work was composed for consort early in the composer's career, subsequently published as a Latin motet in the *Cantiones Sacrae* (1575), and then *recopied* in the early seventeenth century as an instrumental piece bearing a Latin title ("Laudate pueri Dominum") but without text underlay. The fantasia version survives in GB Och MSS. 979-83, an important set of partbooks in the hand of John Baldwin, a singing-man during the final decades of the sixteenth century at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The Baldwin partbooks contain nearly two hundred Latin motets and instrumental works in manuscript bound with a print of the *Cantiones Sacrae*, the collection that holds Byrd's adaptation for voices of his fantasia. Kerman notes that the text of "Laudate Pueri" is drawn from three different psalms and that Byrd likely "merely hunted for some hortatory verses to fit [the instrumental fantasia] in a rough and ready way."<sup>29</sup> Kerman asserts that of the two versions of the piece that appear in Baldwin's collection, the instrumental fantasia is earlier, pointing out that "minor differences from the motet as printed settle clearly the question of priority."<sup>30</sup> Byrd's composition also appears in two later manuscript sources, Tenbury 1382 and GB BL Add. 17786-91, copied without text for instrumental performance but

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<sup>29</sup> J. Kerman, "The Elizabethan Motet: A Study of Texts for Music," *Studies in the Renaissance* 9 (1962): 290.

<sup>30</sup> J. Kerman, "Byrd's Motets: Chronology and Canon," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 14, no. 3 (1961): 361.

bearing in both the title of the Latin motet as published in the *Cantiones*.<sup>31</sup> In other words, Byrd's fantasia for six-part consort was adapted for voices by the addition of text, published as a motet in *Cantiones Sacrae*, and then reclaimed as a consort piece that nevertheless continued to bear the title of the motet.

"Laudate pueri" is hardly an isolated example. Byrd's four-part motet "In manus tuas", published in the composer's collection of Catholic liturgical music, the *Gradualia* of 1605, adapts an older string fantasia to support a text famous for its recitation on the scaffold by condemned Jesuits.<sup>32</sup> Motets and anthems by Tallis, Parsons, Mundy, Taverner, among others were conceived as instrumental works for viol consort. Conversely, many of the important manuscript sources of consort music, such as Add. 31390, Add. 32377, and Gb-Lbl Add. 30480-4, contain Latin motets adapted for instrumental performance by the omission of text.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, consort music for viols not only bears many of the stylistic traits of the liturgical polyphony that served as the musical *lingua franca* for many of its composers, but is in many cases the very *same* music (a fact that is for the most part not reflected by the modern consort revival).

The myriad points of connection between Latin polyphony and consort music—their proximity in surviving manuscripts, their stylistic similarities, their mutual emergence from the milieu of choral foundations—have led scholars to wonder whether this instrumental genre served as "cover" for acts of Recusant

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<sup>31</sup> Craig Monson, *Voices and Viols in England, 1600-1650* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982), 178.

<sup>32</sup> Monson, "Byrd, The Catholics, and the Motet: The Hearing Reopened," 370.

<sup>33</sup> J. Milsom, "Sacred Songs in the Chamber," in *English Choral Practice, 1400-1650*, ed. J. Morehen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

devotion. Joseph Kerman, John Milsom, Craig Monson, and others have chronicled the continued production of Latin liturgical music during the virulently anti-Catholic periods under Elizabeth and James I.<sup>34</sup> Though some of this repertory was purportedly for use by the several choral institutions that were permitted to celebrate the Anglican liturgy in Latin (including the Chapel Royal and those of Oxford and Cambridge), a substantial number of motets set texts that can be interpreted as expressing sympathy with the Catholic cause. While it is outside the scope of this chapter, it might be revealing to examine the extent to which motets that survive in instrumental versions in manuscripts of consort music are the same as those that have been identified as covertly Catholic.

David Price has studied the proliferation of Roman Catholic liturgical and devotional music during the reign of Elizabeth I and noted the wealth of consort music that has survived in manuscripts commissioned or copied by Recusant enthusiasts.<sup>35</sup> In his discussion of the musical circle of Francis Tregian the Younger (1574–1619), famous for compiling and copying several important manuscripts including the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, Price writes that “it has yet to be proved that Roman Catholic allegiance was the strongest impulse to composition or private performance in this period. However, such allegiance was clearly a vital factor in the

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<sup>34</sup> This material constitutes a substantial bibliography, highlights of which include: H. Benham, *Latin Church Music in England c. 1460-1575* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1977); P. Doe, “Tallis’s ‘Spem in Alium’ and the Elizabethan Respond-Motet,” *Music and Letters* 51, no. 1 (1970): 1-14; Kerman, “The Elizabethan Motet: A Study of Texts for Music.”; Kerman, “Music and Politics: The Case of William Byrd (1540-1623).”; D. Mateer, “John Sadler and Oxford, Bodleian Mss Mus. E. 1-5,” *Music and Letters* 60, no. 3 (1979): 281-295; Milsom, “Sacred Songs in the Chamber.”; Monson, “Byrd, The Catholics, and the Motet: The Hearing Reopened.”; P. Phillips, *English sacred music, 1549-1649* (Oxford: Gimmell, 1991, 1992).

<sup>35</sup> See particularly Price, *Patrons and musicians of the English Renaissance*; D. Price, “Gilbert Talbot, Seventh Earl of Shrewsbury: An Elizabethan Courtier and His Music,” *Music and Letters* 57, no. 2 (1976): 144-151.

conservation of the Latin musical tradition, in the stimulation of enthusiasm for Italian musical literature of all kinds and in the upkeep of instruments and private performers for the ad hoc performances of both liturgical and secular music, often in secret.”<sup>36</sup> Given the overlap that Price and others have identified between Recusant circles and the patrons and compilers of manuscripts of consort music, as well as the presence of Catholic liturgical music arranged for viols in those and other manuscripts, one might be tempted to view consort music as an extension of the devotional activities of the English Catholic community. While that view has some merit, my strong sense is that this “Catholic” connection manifests a larger and more significant pattern: music for viol consort also served to self-consciously preserve an archaic set of musical and social practices that were associated with the “old” religion and its music.

### **The archaic cantus firmus and the pedagogy of the “plainsong” canon**

Certainly one of the most conspicuously “archaic” elements of the consort repertory has been its reliance on cantus firmus forms throughout its history. Granted, Lawes, Jenkins and Purcell composed fewer cantus firmus consort pieces than Stuart and Jacobean composers (Christopher Tye’s consort music from the middle of the sixteenth century, for example, is comprised of almost nothing *but* cantus firmus forms). Nevertheless, the use of cantus firmus polyphony hung on in England in the consort repertory some 100 years after it had all but died out

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<sup>36</sup> Price, *Patrons and musicians of the English Renaissance*, 166.

elsewhere! But just *how* might the use of a structural cantus firmus in consort music composed as late as the 1680s (in the case of the admittedly anachronistic works by Purcell) suggest that music for viols served as a self-conscious preserve of a “liturgical” *habitus* of the previous century? I offer two intersecting lines of argument here, one historical and one critical. My “historical” argument concerns a little-studied but substantial repertory of pedagogical music principally from the 1590s that relies on musical exercises based on “plain-song” cantus firmi to teach the composition and performance of counterpoint. These exercises, most commonly in the form of canons “to the playnsong” by Byrd, John Bull, Thomas Woodson, Thomas Farmer, William Bathe, George Waterhouse, Elway Bevin and others, originated in the same milieu as the viol consort. Significantly, many of these composers were known to be Catholic, and this music relies for its cantus firmi on plainsongs drawn from the Sarum chant repertory outlawed by Reformers. My “critical” argument concerns the experience of *performing* cantus firmus polyphony, an activity that, I suggest, was deeply connected to pre-Reformation attitudes about devotion and the performance of liturgy.

A striking testament to the continued importance of cantus firmus polyphony in England was the brief but enthusiastic flowering of publications of plain-song canons during the 1590s, a repertory that has garnered only isolated, peripheral attention in the scholarship.<sup>37</sup> Scholars have paid little attention to this pedagogical

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<sup>37</sup> Elway Bevin’s treatise of 1631 is a puzzlingly late outlier. The scholarship on the pedagogical canon repertory includes: L.P. Bowling, “A Transcription and Comparative Analysis of ‘Diverse and Sundry Waies of Two Parts in One’ (1591) by John Farmer” (University of Northern Colorado, 1982); D. Collins, “‘Sufficient to Quench the Thirst of the Most Insaciate Scholler Whatsoever’: George Waterhouse’s 1,163 Canons on the Plain-song Miserere,” in *Canons and Canonic Techniques, 14th-16th Centuries: Theory, Practice, and Reception History*, ed. K. Schiltz and B.J. Blackburn (Dudley, MA:

tradition in part, perhaps, because it does not easily fit into the historiography of the period—one focused on the adoption by English composers of the Italian madrigal and modernizing *secunda pratica* use of musical rhetoric and chromaticism. But the canons' conspicuously old-fashioned reliance on cantus firmus technique and their distinctly modal partwriting are exactly what interest me here.<sup>38</sup> Though not all of the sources of these collections' cantus firmi have been identified, those that have—such as the *Miserere mihi*—are drawn from Sarum liturgical chant.<sup>39</sup> With their untexted plainsongs stripped of their incriminating Latin (in most cases), the canons are clearly not liturgical, yet they remain evocative of centuries of Catholic ritual. Moreover, it is difficult to decipher the spirit in which these treatises were offered by their authors: despite their purportedly pedagogic function, they include little in the way of actual instruction. Instead, they feature a perfunctory rehearsal of the basics of sixteenth-century musical notation followed by their apparent *raison d'être*: the presentation of sets of two—and in a few cases three—part canons against plainsong cantus firmi.

This pedagogical repertory deserves its own focused study, beyond the scope of this chapter, which would examine the canon collections in the context of contemporary continental collections of *Bicinia* as well as the nearly millennium-old

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Peeters, 2007), 407-20; P.K. Danner, "The Miserere Mihi and the English Reformation: A Study of the Evolution of a Cantus Firmus Genre in Tudor Music" (Paolo Alto, CA: Stanford University, 1967); B. Rainbow, "Bathe and His Introductions to Musicke," *The Musical Times* 123, no. 1670 (1982): 243-7; H.M. Miller, "Pretty Wayes: For Young Beginners to Looke on," *The Musical Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1947): 543-556; H.M. Miller, "Forty Wayes of 2 Pts. in One of Tho[mas Woodson]," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 8, no. 1 (1955): 14-21; W.H. Grattan Flood, "New Light on Late Tudor Composers: XV. John Farmer," *The Musical Times* 67, no. 997 (1926): 219-20.

<sup>38</sup> Bowling, "A Transcription and Comparative Analysis of 'Diverse and Sundry Waies of Two Parts in One' (1591) by John Farmer," 134.

<sup>39</sup> Several of the plainsongs used by Bevins and Bathe have yet to be identified.



tradition of chant pedagogy traced by Anna Maria Berger and others. For now, however, I argue that the collections of canons to the plainsong reveal traces of a tradition of pedagogy that was perfectly suited to teaching the performance and composition of consort music. In the context of this chapter, in which I suggest that the consort tradition preserved aspects of a pre-Reformation musical *habitus*, the canon treatises are relevant because of their reliance on and dissemination of Sarum plainsong melodies. Like Coprario's manuscript treatise *Rule how to compose* (c. 1610), which adopts a format of short explanations followed by graded examples to be copied by the student, the canon collections recall a schoolboy's catechism. While cultivating a sensitivity to and fluency with the possibilities of voice leading, the plainsong canons would have required (or at least resulted in) the frequent repetition and rote memorization of snippets of Catholic chant—a relationship to those melodies that recalls the tradition of memorization and recitation that had been the chorister's and singing man's principal occupation for centuries before the dissolution of the monasteries.

Katharine Breen describes the role of grammar pedagogy in the cultivation of a Christian *habitus* very much in the lineage of early consort music. "*Grammatica*" Breen writes, "was not simply one *habitus* among many, but rather the first and paradigmatic to which all subsequent *habitu*s necessarily referred. As the first subject of formal study, and a learned language with clearly articulated rules, it was thought to shape the mind both linguistically and morally from the very first repetitions of *do, das, dat*. On a more theoretical level, both grammar itself and the disciplinary process by which it was instilled were attached to a broader ethical

discourse via terms such as *regere* (to rule or govern) and *subiectio* (subject or subjection), with the interplay of governance and subordination in each grammatical speech-act initiating the schoolboy into a normatively ordered community that extended from the microcosm of the self to the macrocosm of Latin Christendom.”<sup>40</sup> The plainsong canons, as I’ll show, contributed to a musical pedagogical tradition descended from the one Breen chronicles. The canons serve as a musical equivalent to the Latin “*do, das, dat*” she describes, and are similarly implicated, I argue, in the acquisition of musical competencies and their accompanying *habitus*. My discussion of the plainsong canons—necessarily circumscribed by the trajectory of this chapter—will focus on their connection to the viol consort repertory and their use of plainsongs borrowed from the Sarum liturgy.

In his *Plaine and Easie Introduction* (1597), Morley describes the advantages to be gained by making and performing canons on a plainsong.

“...But if the Canon were made in that manner vppon a plainsong (I meane a plainesong not made of purpose for the descant, but a common plainsong or hymne, such as heretofore haue been vsed in churches) it would be much harder to do...and when you can at the first sight sing two partes in one in those kindes vppon a plainesong, then may you practise other hard vvaies, and speciallie those per arsin & thesin, which of all other Canons carie both most difficultie, and

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<sup>40</sup> Katharine Breen, *Imagining an English Reading Public, 1150-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.

most maiestie...But whosoeuer can sing such a one at the first sight, vpon a ground, may boldie vndertake to make any Canon which in musicke may be made...because that he vvho in it is perfect, may almost at the first sight see what may be done vpon anie plainsong.”<sup>41</sup>

This is a striking passage not only because it describes so accurately the canon publications (in the subsequent paragraph Morley mentions Byrd and Alfonso Ferrabosco II—in whose names a lost collection of plainsong canons was registered in 1603), but also because it suggests how students might have used the canons as aids to their musical development. “[Y]ou can at the first sight *sing* two partes in one...,” Morley writes, a construction that indicates that *performance* of the canonic “waies” was key to deriving their pedagogical benefits (the verb “to sing” in this period did not refer solely to vocal performance, but could also mean “to play upon instruments”).<sup>42</sup>

It is not just Morley’s description that suggests that performance, as opposed—or in addition—to the study of canons on the page, was a preferred mode of engagement with them. In his *Diuers & sundry waies of two parts in one, to the number of fortie, vppon one playnsong* (1591), John Farmer lays out his canons in such a way that they would have been straightforward to perform in parts but extremely difficult to study on paper. Farmer places the plainsong in whole notes across the top of each page and arrays the two canonic voices below in two different clefs, with a rubric below describing their relationship (for example, “two parts in

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<sup>41</sup> T. Morley, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (London, 1597), 114.

<sup>42</sup> Milsom, “Sacred Songs in the Chamber.”

one in the eight, the basse before, the treble follow a minem, the plainsong in the midst”) (see figure 3). In her study of the training of choristers in sixteenth-century England, Jane Flynn notes that choristers “practiced their lessons as a group, usually in one room.”<sup>43</sup> Such a group lesson, by three or more singers or instrumentalists, would immediately reveal the lessons offered by the canons, while any attempt to decipher them by a single individual would be frustrated by their presentation in parts (naturally, *sans* barlines) arrayed multiple clefs on different regions of the page (see figure 3).

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<sup>43</sup> J. Flynn, “The Education of Choristers in England during the Sixteenth Century,” in *English Choral Practice 1400-1650*, ed. J. Morehen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 181.

VIII.

The plainsong, comprised of 20 semibreves, is based on an excerpt from the second phrase of "Kyrie Cunctipotens Genitor Deus" from the Sarum Gradual. The plainsong was identified by Peter Danner in *The Miserere Mihi and the English Reformation: A Study of the Evolution of a Cantus Firmus Genre in Tudor Music* (Ph.D. dissertation, 1967).

The plainfong.

The bass part.

2 parts in one.

The treble part.

2 parts in one.

2 parts in one in the eight, the Basse before, the Treble follow a minem, the plainfong in the midst.

A rubric explains the canon. The bass and treble sing the same melody an octave apart and displaced by one minim. The ranges of the parts dictate that the plainsong will sit "in the midst"--between the bass and treble.

Figure 23. "Plainsong" canon from John Farmer's *Diuers & sundry waies* (1591).

Elway Bevin's *A briefe and short instruction of the art of musicke* (1631), interestingly, offers its material in open score with barlines (see figure 4), a format that would make it easily accessible to individual study or keyboard realization.



7 Canon.

The treble part.

The bass part.

The plainsong.

Three Mynomes following. ————— The rubric (the treble part enters three minims after the bass).

Figure 24. "Plainsong" canon in open score from Elway Bevin's *A briefe and short instruction in the art of Musicke* (1613)

Though some canons may have been intended for study at the keyboard, Hugh Miller notes that "there are a number of passages that involve impossibilities" in his study of Thomas Woodson's manuscript collection of "Forty wayes of 2 pts. in one" to the *Miserere mihi* (GB-BL MS Add. 29996).<sup>44</sup> The "impossibilities" Miller cites include voice crossings (and scalar passages in one voice that pass through a held note in another voice) and resolutions of suspensions to the unison, phenomena that do not "read" particularly well on a keyboard instrument. Surely many plainsong canons were conceived by—and for—keyboard players. In his dissertation on plainsong settings of the *Miserere mihi*, Danner notes that the origin of such settings was likely related to the practice in the Sarum office of Compline of

<sup>44</sup> Miller, "Forty Wayes of 2 Pts. in One of Tho[mas Woodson]," 19.

singing four psalms interspersed with the *Miserere*. “Instead of singing the *Miserere* after each Psalm,” Danner reports, “a short keyboard version of the antiphon was often played on the organ...in order to provide variety to the plainsong [(and, presumably, to allow the singers to rest their voices)].”<sup>45</sup> The plainsong canons of the 1590s are clearly several decades removed from this practice, though the fact that there are extant examples by Byrd and Bull, both renowned keyboard players, suggests that such a legacy had not been forgotten. William Bathe, on the other hand, utilizes the same layout as Farmer in his *A briefe introduction to the skill of song* (c. 1592), one that virtually requires performance by a trio of participants (see figure 5). To this end, Bathe prefaces his collection with a version of George Kirbye’s setting of “The Lamentation” from East’s Psalter of 1592 separated in parts on facing pages. In Bathe’s print of Kirbye’s setting, text is underlain only in the cantus, a presentation that suggests performance by a chorister accompanied by viols (see figure 6).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Danner, “The Miserere Mihi and the English Reformation: A Study of the Evolution of a Cantus Firmus Genre in Tudor Music,” 37.

<sup>46</sup> One is strongly reminded of Giles Farnaby’s manuscript collection of Psalm settings “for viols and voice” mentioned above.

10. sundry waies of 2 parts in one vpon the plain song.

Figure 25. "Plainsong" canon from William Bathe's *A briefe introduction to the skill of song* (1592).

Figure 26. George Kirby's setting of the Lamentation from Bathe's *A Briefe introduction* showing text underlay in the top part only, a layout that suggests intended performance as a consort song.

Whether studied by an individual or executed by a small ensemble of students, the canons emerged from the professional church music establishment that produced the composers responsible for the proliferation of consort music in



the houses of the English gentry during the reigns of James and Charles I.<sup>47</sup> Farmer, for example, was appointed Master of the Children at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, in 1595 and served there until 1599 when he returned to London.<sup>48</sup> David Brown has observed that Farmer's song "Take Time" from his 1599 madrigal collection is actually an instrumental hexachord piece "to which words of a markedly pre-madrigalian moralizing character have been added."<sup>49</sup> This typifies the sort of piece that a master of choristers would use to train his charges to sing and play polyphony on viols, and it is likely that Farmer used his collection of canons for the same purpose while in Dublin. *Divers and Sundry Waies* presents its musical material in an encyclopedic variety of clefs and in tessituras suitable to a range of voices or instruments, and includes explanatory rubrics that would serve either a student of composition or a group of young musicians practicing their pricksong together. It is striking that of the authors of collections of plainsong canons, Farmer, Byrd, Bull and Elway Bevin all served as masters of choristers at some point in their careers (Byrd at Lincoln Cathedral in the 1560s, Bull at Hereford in the 1580s, and Bevin in Bristol during the same period). Of course, service as master of choristers (and often organist) was an expected step on the career ladder of a successful church musician; the point I wish to make in drawing this connection is that canons to the plainsong originate in the same milieu as the viol consort and likely served to help educate the choristers who would grow up to compose, teach,

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<sup>47</sup> It is worth rehearsing here the fact that nearly every composer of consort music from the form's inception in the middle of the sixteenth century received his early musical training as a chorister. For more on the historical connection between music education and consort music, see Morris, "Viol Consorts and Music Education in Elizabethan and Jacobean England (1558-1625)."

<sup>48</sup> Bowling, "A Transcription and Comparative Analysis of 'Diverse and Sundry Waies of Two Parts in One' (1591) by John Farmer," 12.

<sup>49</sup> David Brown, "Farmer, John (i)," *Grove Music Online*, n.d.

and perform consort music during its subsequent “golden age.” These four composers, of course, also left a significant legacy of viol consort music in their own right! Flynn describes an increased emphasis on composition—as opposed to memorization and improvisation—in the training of choristers late in the century, an observation that points to the influence of plainsong canon pedagogy on consort music.<sup>50</sup> It is worth noting that plainsong canons offer lessons in both composition *and* performance. By singing or playing the plainsong, an instructor or experienced student can control both the tempo and pitch of the ensemble while supervising the correct execution of the other parts. Alternately, a more experienced musician can perform the first entrance of the canonic voice and thereby model its execution for the student who “follows” with each subsequent entrance. Such use would represent a continuation of the centuries-old tradition of using plainsong to teach choristers a variety of musical skills.<sup>51</sup>

So the plainsong canon collections of the 1590s were likely performed and studied by choristers as part of the musical training necessary for their later professional activities including the composition and performance of music for viol consort. After the turn of the century, only Catholic liturgical polyphony and ensemble music for viols continued to make use of cantus firmus forms (aside from a handful of pieces for lute and keyboard). For this reason, the Catholic origin of the majority of the plainsongs used in the pedagogical canon repertory is particularly interesting. It did not have to be so; there were other sources of potential cantus firmi that composers could have—and often did—make use of including psalm

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<sup>50</sup> Flynn, “The Education of Choristers in England during the Sixteenth Century,” 194.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

tunes, hexachords, popular tunes like “Browning” or “Susanna”, and original melodies “made of purpose for the descant,” as Morley put it. Danner notes that the *Miserere* (used as the plainsong by Bull, Byrd, Bevin, and Woodson) is one of three cantus firmi favored by English composers, the other two being the *In nomine* and the *Feliz namque*.<sup>52</sup> Aplin, whose work traces the survival of plainsong composition in Anglican music, contributes the *Te deum* to this list and notes that many of the vernacular settings in Merbecke’s *Booke of Common Praier Noted* (1550) are careful adaptations of Sarum chant. “Several of the canticles,” Aplin writes, “which had formed an integral part of the Latin Hours were retained, in translation, in the forms of the English service. The *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* at English evensong, and also the *Benedictus* at matins, were simply taken over intact from the ancient rite.”<sup>53</sup> Kerman, also, was moved to investigate the curious incongruity between, on the one hand, the radical changes wrought by reformers to the liturgy and, on the other, the strain of musical conservatism that saw the continued production of motets in Latin through the end of the sixteenth century. “That some composers kept to the old faith is certain,” Kerman observes, “that music was written for clandestine or foreign Catholic services is at least a possibility. Study of the repertory, however, brings to light more and more details that speak against any actual liturgical intention for the motets, and suggests that technical considerations—at best, determination to

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<sup>52</sup> Danner, “The *Miserere* Mihi and the English Reformation: A Study of the Evolution of a Cantus Firmus Genre in Tudor Music,” 7.

<sup>53</sup> J. Aplin, “The Survival of Plainsong in Anglican Music,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 32 (1979): 248.

preserve a tradition; at worst, force of habit—played the decisive role in their continued popularity.”<sup>54</sup>

### **The cantus firmus as spiritual symbol**

The “determination to preserve a tradition [or]...force of habit” to which Kerman elusively ascribes the continued use of the musical techniques of the motet, among them the reliance on cantus firmus forms, is precisely the cultural-historical territory that this chapter seeks to explore. Denis Steven’s assertion, quoted by Danner, that “the continuity that undoubtedly existed was a musico-technical one, and not musico-liturgical,” has served to foreclose discussion of the ways that the use of chant melodies in polyphony composed after the abolition of the Sarum rite may have preserved something of its ritual meaning.<sup>55</sup> Danner’s conclusion, which follows a resolutely positivist project that in no way substantiates it, typifies a certain tone-deafness that characterizes many scholars’ approach to the question of English musical conservatism.<sup>56</sup> “The significance of the cantus firmus as a spiritual symbol,” Danner writes, “was virtually eliminated [by the Reformation]. The fact that the *Miserere mihi*, together with other cantus firmus forms, continued to attract the attention of composers, can be attributed to two factors: (1) the strength of the

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<sup>54</sup> Kerman, “The Elizabethan Motet: A Study of Texts for Music,” 277.

<sup>55</sup> Danner, “The Miserere Mihi and the English Reformation: A Study of the Evolution of a Cantus Firmus Genre in Tudor Music,” 6.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Milsom’s unsubstantiated assertion in an otherwise carefully argued paper that “from the untexted motets in Lbl 30480-4 we can identify a new category of user: the performer who valued the musical substance of a motet but had no interest in its words...the textless motets were presumably played on instruments or sung as vocalizes, perhaps using solmization syllables. Stripped of their words, they were purged of tangible links with religion faction and became, in effect, abstract music of universal appeal” in Milsom, “Sacred Songs in the Chamber,” 170.

structural cantus firmus tradition and (2) the need for a strong structural element in the evolution of extended instrumental forms.”<sup>57</sup> Danner’s factors are certainly plausible, though it is easily pointed out that Jacobean and Caroline composers managed to create a range of “extended instrumental forms,” such as the fantasia-suite, that did not require the use of a structural cantus firmus. More to the point, though, I take issue with his breezy—and unargued—claim that the liturgical cantus firmus ceased to bear meaning as a “spiritual symbol” with the reform of the official liturgy.<sup>58</sup>

The plainsong canon collections testify to the continued ritual importance of their cantus firmi in two ways: the care with which the canon composers chose their plainsongs—nearly all drawn from the Sarum rite—and the fact that the collections’ authors weren’t simply relying on received compositional techniques in their own work, but actively constructing and transmitting a “medieval” musical language to their students. John Farmer, whose biography offers no indication that he was anything but the Protestant that his employment by the Church of England would suggest, used the second phrase of the Kyrie “Cunctipotens Genitor Deus” as the plainsong in his *Diverse and Sundry Waies* (see figure 7).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Danner, “The Miserere Mihi and the English Reformation: A Study of the Evolution of a Cantus Firmus Genre in Tudor Music,” 124.

<sup>58</sup> For an account of the preservation and transformation of non-musical Catholic ritual material during the Reformation, see Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); E. Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

<sup>59</sup> Though Farmer certainly wouldn’t be the first Anglican priest and musician of the period with Catholic sympathies. See, for example, John Mateer’s discussion of John Sadler in Mateer, “John Sadler and Oxford, Bodleian Mss Mus. E. 1-5.” Bowling, “A Transcription and Comparative Analysis of ‘Diverse and Sundry Waies of Two Parts in One’ (1591) by John Farmer,” 27.



Figure 27. Kyrie "Cunctipotens Genitor Deus" from the Sarum Graduale (in this case the 1547 print), source of Farmer's plainsong.

Used in the Sarum rite on apostolic feast days, this troped Kyrie appeared in the Sarum Graduale first printed in England in the middle of the fifteenth century. Such a book would have been banned several times over by the time Farmer likely encountered the chant sometime in the 1580s, and it is relevant, though outside the realistic scope of this chapter, where and how he came into contact with it. William Bathe, who was ordained a Jesuit priest in Padua in 1599, chose a yet-unidentified cycle of ten plainsongs for the two-part canons in his *A Briefe Introduction* (see figure 8). Bathe's plainsongs are all between thirteen and twenty-two semibreves long and, if the his first plainsong's close resemblance to the Vespers hymn *Christe redemptor omnium* is any indication, are drawn from the large repertory of hymns in the Sarum use.



Figure 28. The yet-unidentified plainsongs from Bathe's *A briefe introduction*.

Elway Bevin made use of several plainsongs in his collection of 1631, including a truncated version of the *Miserere mihi* and a phrase resembling the Marian Office

hymn *Memento salutis auctor*. Bevin used this cantus firmus in a canon—one of the most complicated in his collection—for “five parts in one to the plain-song, resting five semibriefes after other, in a Round. Thrice over.” Following it is a second, shorter plainsong comprised of just five notes, prefaced with a poem (see figure 9):

Fifteene parts in one, loe here may you see,  
Upon the Plain-song, all contain'd in three.  
And to this intent, In five notes consist,  
That may represent the five wounds of Christ.<sup>60</sup>

Fifteene parts in one, loe here may you see,  
Vpon the Plain-song, all contain'd in three.      And to this intent, In five notes consist,  
That may represent the five wounds of Christ.

Canon three in one per *Arsin & The sin, aliud in Diapason.*  
Sing this five times over.      This last note that standeth by it selfe, is for the finall Close of the first part.

Tenor.      Five voc.

Bassus.

Laus Deo.

Figure 29. "Five wounds" canon from Bevin's *A briefe and short instruction*.

<sup>60</sup> E. Bevin, *A briefe and short instruction of the art of musicke* (London, 1631).



Eamon Duffy has chronicled the pre-Reformation devotion to the image of the five wounds of Christ, noting that “the cult of the wounds was one of the most important and far reaching in late medieval England, and it found expression not only in *Horae* but in countless vernacular sermons, prayers, and verses.”<sup>61</sup> Above the five-note plainsong Bevin directs his reader to “sing this five times over,” an instruction that recalls an earlier age’s fascination with symbolic five-fold repetitions (see figure 9). Duffy quotes the will of a Greenwich widow who, in 1496, asked her parish priest to say “V masses of the V woonds V days to yeder a fore the hie aulter and every masse wyle V smale candells brenyng.”<sup>62</sup> Prayers to the five wounds of Christ often appear in surviving Books of Hours (“*Horae*”), those once ubiquitous accessories to private devotion that were kept by many English Catholics despite their proscription by the numerous Elizabethan edicts. *Horae* continued to be imported from the continent by English Catholics during the Reformation, and Bevin, who was expelled from his position as organist and master of choristers at Bristol Cathedral for recusancy in 1637 (according to Hawkins), may have modeled the final canons of *A Briefe and Short Instruction* on their private devotions to the wounds of Christ.<sup>63</sup>

Bevin’s “five notes...that may represent the five wounds of Christ” make explicit a devotional subtext that runs through the plainsong canon collections and offers a clear refutation to Danner’s claim that the Reformation eliminated “the significance of the cantus firmus as a spiritual symbol.” However, I believe that the

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<sup>61</sup> E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Alters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 245.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>63</sup> Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570*; J. Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (London, 1776), 505.

explicitly Catholic resonances, when present, of the plainsongs in the canon collections represent just one—albeit important—register of their “spiritual significance.” For teachers and students on both sides of the confessional divide, the collections entwined musical and devotional education by anchoring composition and sight-reading skills to a catechistic repetition of plainchant melodies, a tradition that Anna Maria Berger traces at least as far back as the ninth century.<sup>64</sup> Though the Reformation sought a wholesale change in the liturgy, plainchant continued to be understood as the musical manifestation of the Word of God, a fact testified to by the continued use of chant melodies in the Anglican service (such as the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis*) and the adaptation of Sarum chant in Merbecke’s *Booke of Common Praier Noted*.<sup>65</sup> The repetition and memorization of the particular plainsong melodies required by the pedagogical canons both recalled their ritual use of generations past and furnished students with a set of compositional and performance skills that would manifest themselves in the viol consort repertory (and elsewhere) of subsequent musical generations. In her discussion of the proliferation of books of private devotion during the Reformation, Mary Patterson reminds us that “despite the obvious ways in which print altered aspects of classical medieval pedagogy, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century persons still lived in an age in which commitment of information to memory was...regarded a cognitive discipline...hence what may seem to the modern reader like egregious authorial redundancies within these texts were of course intentional facilitators of instruction

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<sup>64</sup> A.M.B. Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>65</sup> Aplin, “The Survival of Plainsong in Anglican Music,” 248.

and memorization.”<sup>66</sup> The fortyfold repetition of the same plainsong melody in Farmer, Byrd, Woodson, and Bevin would have framed instruction in the mechanics of musical imitation and harmony with a rehearsal of the idea that making music constitutes a form of devotion. It is interesting to note the persistence of this association of the canon with musical spirituality later in the century: Ravenscroft, Playford, Lawes and other compilers of collections of bawdy catches invariably included in their collections a compensatory handful of canons with sacred or devotional texts, often in Latin.

### **The *In nomine* and “liturgical *habitus*”**

The plainsong canons demonstrate, I believe, a pedagogy sensitive to the technical and devotional possibilities of cantus firmus polyphony, one of consort music’s characteristic compositional idioms. Warwick Edwards has counted over 150 surviving specimens of consort *In nomines*, pieces in which imitative polyphony is woven around a cantus firmus based on Taverner’s setting of the Sarum Vespers antiphon *Gloria tibi trinitas*.<sup>67</sup> In addition to his several *In nomines*, Byrd composed nearly a dozen cantus firmus consort pieces on hymns including *Christe qui lux, Te lucis*, and *Sermone blando* while consort hymns survive by Christopher Tye, Robert White, Thomas Tallis, and numerous others. When hexachord pieces and works that use popular tunes such as “Browning” and “Walsingham” as cantus firmi are

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<sup>66</sup> M.H. Patterson, *Domesticating the Reformation: Protestant Best Sellers, Private Devotion, and the Revolution of English Piety* (Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Presses, 2007), 47.

<sup>67</sup> Warwick Edwards, “In Nomine,” *Grove Music Online*, n.d.

included, the repertory of cantus firmus pieces for viol consort encompasses the entire history of the form and nearly every known composer of consort music. While it is unlikely, given a century of careful archival research by British musicologists, that many more hitherto unknown works of cantus firmus consort music will come to light, the scholarship has been nearly silent on the compelling, if difficult, question of the cultural significance of such repertory. In an age when the use of a cantus firmus was seen as either archaic, abstrusely theoretical, or associated with forbidden Catholic liturgy, what did cantus firmus polyphony offer its amateur enthusiasts? As late as the 1650s, Dudley North mused that

There is a kind of brisk, lusty, yet mellifluent vein, that flows as in *In nomine*... that stirs our bloud, and raises our spirits, with liveliness and activity, to satisfie both quickness of heart and hand.<sup>68</sup>

In the case of the *In nomine* and other pieces that make use of plainsong from the Sarum rite, how did consort players relate to the *liturgical* content of the music, to the cantus firmus *as* plainsong? What, in other words, was actually being performed when musicians gathered to play pleasurably complex imitative polyphony anchored by a slow moving melody known to have been, in many cases, a musical utterance of God's Word (albeit one in a forbidden dialect)? Did hexachord pieces, such as those for consort by Bull, Ferrabosco II, Thomkins, Farmer, and

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<sup>68</sup> D. North, *A Forest Promiscuous of Several Seasons Productions* (London, 1659), 323.

numerous others, or popular tunes, offer a distinctly different set of connotations and meanings by virtue of the non-liturgical origin of their cantus firmi?

These are difficult questions, and scholarship on the subject has tended to characterize cantus firmus polyphony as a stylistic, rather than a cultural, phenomenon. Aplin's conclusion that the "the cantus firmus work was a valued structural type, and composers remained faithful to its formal principle" typifies an approach that relegates the cantus firmus to the role of generic marker.<sup>69</sup> However, the transformation of the plainsong in cantus firmus polyphony from a ritual melody to *pfundnote* cantus firmus can be just as easily understood as an *intensification* as it can an abstraction. Polyphony was conceived as a *trope*, an effusion of creative ritual energy triggered by the plainsong liturgy. Cantus firmus polyphony plays on the ritualized order of chant, emphasizing the musical morphology of the plainsong, its corporeality, its status as an *object* of devotion. The remaining voices of a cantus firmus texture are acolytes to its ritual centrality, it is the Word upon which all is based, its transubstantiation from notation into sound an echo of the Eucharist, a priestly act that figures the musician as celebrant. The cantus firmus marks time like the slow but inexorable liturgical calendar, its timescale radically different from the skittering voices that surround it, a firmament that both supports and reveals the frivolity of men's short lives in divine temporality (see figure 10). In the Sarum rite, the organ replaced the choir in "alternatim" settings of liturgical items. Thus organ music was used, according to Edward Higginbottom, "in a truly liturgical sense, since it accounted for part of the liturgical

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<sup>69</sup> Aplin, "The Survival of Plainsong in Anglican Music," 260.

text; it was not merely an additional feature, but a full and intrinsic element.”<sup>70</sup>

Within living memory, then, of many of the composers of cantus firmus consort music, instrumental performance of chant was understood as equivalent, or nearly equivalent, to its vocal counterpart. While no longer liturgical, the genre nevertheless partook of, as Danner put it, the “symbolic relationship [that] existed in England between the chant and the liturgy before the Reformation.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> E. Higginbottom, “The Liturgy and French Classical Organ Music, 2 vols.”, 1979, 4.

<sup>71</sup> Danner, “The Miserere Mihi and the English Reformation: A Study of the Evolution of a Cantus Firmus Genre in Tudor Music,” 5.

The image displays a musical score for William Cranford's five-part *In nomine* (c. 1630). The score is organized into four systems, each containing five staves. The staves are labeled as follows:

- Treble Viol I
- Treble Viol II
- Tenor Viol I
- Tenor Viol II
- Bass Viol

The top staff (Treble Viol I) contains the cantus firmus, which is characterized by a significantly slower timescale compared to the other four staves. The other staves (Treble Viol II, Tenor Viol I, Tenor Viol II, and Bass Viol) provide a more active partwriting. The score includes measure numbers 5, 10, 15, and 20 in the right margin.

Figure 30. The beginning of William Cranford's five-part *In nomine* (c. 1630) showing the radically different timescale of the cantus firmus (in the top voice) and partwriting of the rest of the ensemble.

Useful here is Bruce Holsinger's insight that "the literary history of pre-modern England might be envisioned as in part the product of a creative *habitus* or disposition that would remain fundamentally liturgical long after the demise of any specific liturgical genre or compositional technique."<sup>72</sup> Consort music adapted and supplemented a musical language that had evolved in response to specific liturgical exigencies. These accommodated, of course, not just doctrinal and ritual mandates, but simultaneously the full set of social and aesthetic values at work in the liturgy in cathedrals, monasteries, chapels, and parish churches where the music was performed.<sup>73</sup> Specifically, the compositional strategies of cantus firmus polyphony evolved in relation to particular notions about the role of sacred texts in sacred acts and the relationships among participants (including not just members of the choir but also other clergy as well as those on the far side of the rood screen) and between participants, the Word, and the divine. Musical harmony, of course, symbolized divine order, and musical settings of God's word, performed by man as part of a sacred rite, represented an assimilation and reciprocation of the holy. I should emphasize that the musical *habitus* I'm focused on is that of the members of the choir, the trained singers charged with performing the musical components of the liturgy. For these men and boys, musical polyphony existed as a vehicle for liturgical chant, the musical counterpart to the word of God, and the rules of harmony that

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<sup>72</sup> B. Holsinger, "Liturgy," in *Middle English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 308.

<sup>73</sup> The idea that habitual repetition of ritual acts could instill particular systems of belief, Targoff argues, was one of the premises behind the *Book of Common Prayer*. Targoff describes "an affirmative belief in what Aristotle described as the efficacy of 'habit', [an idea that] originates from the behaviorist philosophy outlined in the Nicomachean Ethics, which posits a causal link between ethics (ethike) and habit (ethos). 'Moral virtue,' Aristotle declares, 'comes about as a result of habit...For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them...we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.'" Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England*, 4.



governed the interplay of their parts echoed, among other things, the choreographic precision of the celebration of the Eucharist, the offices, and the liturgical calendar as whole. Holsinger writes about the ways that medieval English literature enacted organizational and aesthetic principles “that would remain fundamentally liturgical long after the demise of any specific liturgical genre or compositional technique”—in the case of cantus firmus consort music, it is the genre and its techniques themselves that preserve, in part, a liturgical habitus.

In fact, traces of this habitus inhere in the consort repertory, I believe, whether the music makes use of plainsong sources or not. Cantus firmus consort music, such as settings of the *In nomine* and Byrd’s consort hymns, provides a particularly clear example of the preservation of liturgical modes of music making, enshrining a liturgical habitus as a creative mode or idiom. But I would argue that the various vestigial patterns of social interaction and ritual enactment of written texts that characterize the playing of *cantus firmus* consort music can be found across nearly *all* of its subgenres. While evidence survives of the actual devotional use of instrumental consort music—see, for example, John Sadler’s manuscript partbooks of Latin hymns annotated by the compiler with memorials to Catholic martyrs and prefaced with an instrumental *In nomine*—I am interested here in the ways that consort playing *generally* served to recall Catholic ritual behavior.<sup>74</sup> The enactment of the musical rite by professional singers in the celebration of the Mass and Offices was an activity focused inward towards the corporation of the choir, a body whose members faced one another across the dedicated, enclosed space of the

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<sup>74</sup> Mateer, “John Sadler and Oxford, Bodleian Mss Mus. E. 1-5.”

choir. This attentiveness to the other members of the ensemble, required by musical exigencies and re-enforced by the architecture and status of the music as prayer, would be preserved as a defining feature of consort music. In his description of the chapel of Thomas Wolsey, Lord Chancellor under Henry VIII, Bowers notes that the choir was charged with singing the liturgy whether their lord was in attendance or not, and that evidence survives of “recreational music-making, of a more or less informal kind, by the learned musicians of the chapel.”<sup>75</sup> In other words, Wolsey’s singers comprised a musical *community*, not just a professional body charged with enacting the liturgy, and such “recreational” musical activity is a likely antecedent to the later consort gatherings of gentleman and professional church musicians documented by manuscript and other archival evidence.

As stated above, “alternatim” performances with organ, sanctioned by sixteenth-century conciliar legislation and later Pope Clement VII’s encyclopedic *Caeremoniale episcoporum* (1600), testify to the liturgical status, albeit limited, of instrumental performance.<sup>76</sup> The English Catholic composer Richard Deering, who left a wealth of fantasias, *In nomines*, and dances for viol consort, composed several sets of fantasias for the organ that survive in autograph in the service book (Oxford, Christ Church Music MS. 89) he assembled while organist at the English Benedictine convent in Brussels (prior to his move to London in 1625 to serve Queen Henrietta Maria in her Catholic Chapel).<sup>77</sup> These 4-part fantasias (see figure 11), stylistically

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<sup>75</sup> R. Bowers, “The Cultivation and Promotion of Music in the Household and Orbit of Thomas Wolsey,” in *English Church Polyphony* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 1999), 194.

<sup>76</sup> Higginbottom, “The Liturgy and French Classical Organ Music, 2 vols.,” 2-20.

<sup>77</sup> T. Dart, “An Early Seventeenth-Century Book of English Organ Music for the Roman Rite,” *Music and Letters* lii (1971): 36.

somewhat more conservative than Deering's madrigalian fantasias for viols, are marked "pro elevatione" and were played during the Eucharist as the priest elevated the Host. Targoff describes this as a key moment in the ritual, one that "indisputably represented the climactic lay experience of the Mass."<sup>78</sup> Before the Reformation, the ringing of bells might have marked the elevation, but Deering observed the moment by playing one of several fantasias composed on each the eight church tones to accord with the preceding and/or following musical items. The elevation, according to Targoff, "promote[d] a *visual* instance of totalizing continuity"—it was one of the only moments during the Mass when the many disparate actors and lay worshippers were united in their focus.<sup>79</sup> Solemn instrumental music would have contributed an *aural* dimension "of totalizing continuity" as well. The fact that by the early decades of the seventeenth century the elevation in an Anglo-Catholic service was observed by the performance of imitative fantasias, music generically indistinguishable from the most archetypical form for viol consort, invites further consideration of the form's "liturgical" connotations.

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<sup>78</sup> Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England*, 22.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

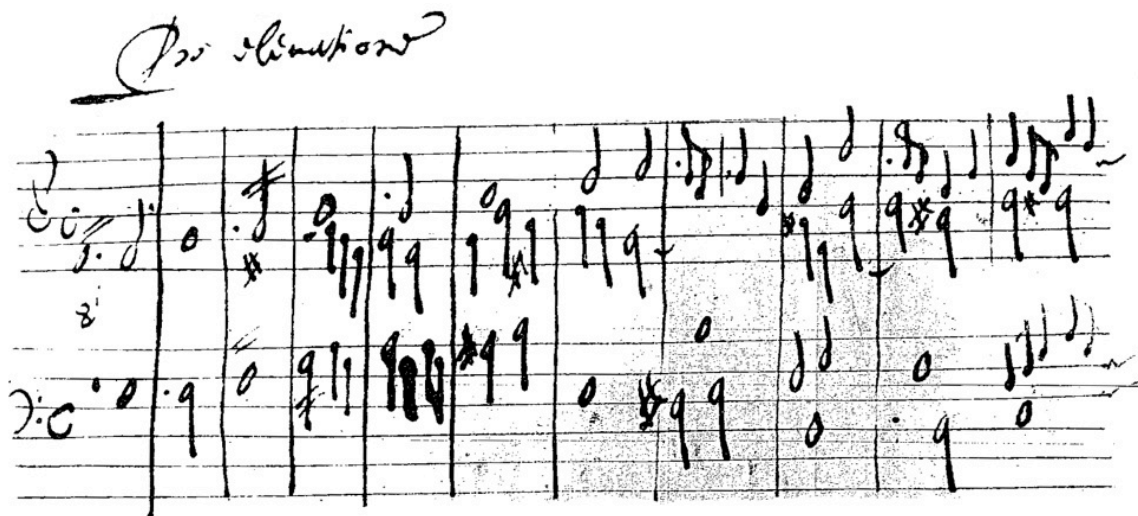


Figure 31. A fantasia by Richard Deering marked "Pro Elevatione" from his autograph service book (Oxford, Christ Church Music MS. 89), p.115.

### Signification, the "dittie," and the suitability of instruments in worship

Deering's organ book, compiled on the continent where there was still work for instrumentalists in the church, is emblematic of the contemporaneous controversy in Protestant England about the role of instruments in worship. This debate, which did not map cleanly along doctrinal lines, informs my discussion of devotional consort music in several ways. Apart from the widespread Puritan anxiety that instrumental music brought "nothing by sensuall delight to the eare, without working any good to the mind at all," the debate centered on whether instrumental music could constitute prayer—whether the "voyces of instruments" could be "significant and edifying by signification."<sup>80</sup> Though there was never any question of consort music being played in a strictly liturgical context, its status as a

<sup>80</sup> The words of Reformers Ludovick Bryskett and John Cotton are quoted in Finney, "Music: a Book of Knowledge in Renaissance England," 38.

devotional activity, particularly in the service of Recusant performance of liturgical music on viols, would have reflected current understandings of the issue. Generally speaking, Catholics of the period were more willing to accept instrumental music in church—provided it was played on the organ—than Protestants, though the *Caeremoniale episcoporum* of 1600, the “first official Roman ceremonial for the use of the whole Church,” went to some length to specify “those items in the liturgy which on account of their doctrinal importance were to be excluded from the organist’s repertory.”<sup>81</sup> Organs, of course, were large and expensive—and potentially incriminating—instruments, and one wonders whether the circumstances of English Catholics called for some leniency. The plainsong canons, as I mentioned above, frequently made use of chant melodies that had been played in earlier times “alternatim” on an organ, and the appearance of instrumental consort music and wordless Latin polyphony in manuscripts owned by and circulated among the Anglo-Catholic gentry suggest that the viol consort may have been informally accepted as a sort of surrogate organ.<sup>82</sup>

Morley’s famous passage from his *Plain and Easy Introduction* (1597) about the effects of texted versus untexted devotional music expresses a conservative, if typical, view.

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<sup>81</sup> Higginbottom, “The Liturgy and French Classical Organ Music, 2 vols.,” 20.

<sup>82</sup> Lady Magdalen Montagu (d. 1608, for whom Byrd wrote a consort song elegy, BE 15/40). Southern notes that in Montagu’s chapel “on solemn feasts the sacrifice of the mass was celebrated with singing and musical instruments.” A.C. Southern, ed., *An Elizabethan Recusant House* (London, 1954), 43.

[Motets] which are made on a ditty, requireth most art, and moueth and causeth most strange effects in the hearer, being aptlie framed for the dittie and well expressed by the singer, for it will draw the auditor (and speciallie the skilfull auditor) into a deuout and reuerent kind of consideration of him for whose praise it was made. But I see not what passions or motions it can stirre vp, being sung as most men doe commonlie sing it: that is, leauing out the dittie and singing onely the bare note, as it were a musicke made onelie for instruments, which will in deed shew the nature of the musicke, but neuer carrie the spirit and (as it were) that liuelie soule which the dittie giueth...

Morley, whose Catholicism is never especially evident in his monumental treatise, argues that music alone can “never carrie the spirit and...liuelie soul” that words convey (a turn of phrase that was curiously echoed by Dudley North, quoted above, who described untexted *In nomines* as music that “stirs our bloud, and raises our spirits, with liveliness and activity”). Morley’s passage, which suggests that untexted music was *sung*, rather than *played* on instruments as has become the scholarly consensus, may in fact document a recusant practice of stripping Latin liturgical music of its incriminating words, a practice that clearly exasperated the author. To answer Morley’s rhetorical question about “what passions or motions [untexted music] can stirre up[?]” I submit the writing of the Anglican theologian Richard Hooker, whose *Of the lawes of ecclesiasticall politie* was published the same year as Morley’s *Introduction*.

So that although we lay altogether aside the consideration of dittie or matter, the very harmonie of sounds being framed in due sort and carried from the eare to the spirituall faculties of our soules, is by a native puissance and efficacie greatly availeable to bring to a perfect temper whatsoever is there troubled, apt as well to quicken the spirits, as to allay that which is too eager, soveraigne against melancholie and despaire, forcible to draw forth teares of devotion if the minde be such as can yeeld them, able both to move and to moderate all affections...They which under pretense of the lawe Ceremoniall abrogated, require the abrogation of instrumenall musique approving neverthelesse the use of vocall melodie to remaine, must shew some reason wherefore the one should be thought a legall Ceremonie and not the other.<sup>83</sup>

Hooker makes the case that music itself (“the very harmonie of sounds”) offers spiritual (and psychological) benefits independent of its words (its “dittie or matter”), and that it thus should be accorded that status of “legall Ceremonie.” While Hooker’s distinctly humanist views are a marked contrast to the numerous Puritan writers of the period (such as William Prynne and John Cotton, quoted above) who cautiously countenanced only the sober singing of psalms, his writing attests to a back and forth about the spiritual efficacy of instrumental music that framed

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<sup>83</sup> R. Hooker, *Of the lavves of ecclesiasticall politie*, 1597, 75.

devotional consort playing. The title page of Thomas Robinson's *The Schoole of Musicke* (1603), for example, one of many such treatises designed to teach gentleman amateurs singing, pricksong, and playing viol, shows King David playing his harp, perhaps the most popular icon deployed by proponents of music in worship, beneath the rubric "In God reioyce, With Instrument and voyce."

Instrumental performance of plainsong cantus firmus or other liturgical or devotional texts did not necessarily rule out a hearing of the "dittie". Higginbottom cites evidence of the recitation of the words of the chant verses performed on organ in the sixteenth-century Catholic *alternatim* practice. He notes that in 1515 "the chapter general of the Dominicans ordered the text of the Offertory and Communion antiphon taken by the organ to be recited" and cites a memorandum presented at the Council of Trent in 1562 that advocated that omitted texts be recited "simplici claraque voce."<sup>84</sup> GB Ob mss.mus.f.20-24, a manuscript collection of consort music from the middle of the seventeenth-century compiled by the Suffolk gentleman Thomas Hamond, contains aphorisms, essays, and snippets of verse scribbled in the margins (including an apology for music that begins "No one science draweth neerer to the essence of God than musique" and a denouncement of "Jack Presbyter" who "made a new Creed, dispised the old; king, state, & religion by him bought and sold"). Hamond's collection contains a several devotional musical items, including a setting by Robert Ramsey of a verse from Psalm 120 ("Woe I am constrained"), and suggests that the domestic activity of playing consort music could include the

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<sup>84</sup> Higginbottom, "The Liturgy and French Classical Organ Music, 2 vols.," 54.



sharing and recitation of texts and, presumably, prayers.<sup>85</sup> More than a century earlier, Holbein drew a scene of communal domestic devotion in the household of St. Thomas More. Duffy points out that the book in each family member's hand is a Book of Hours, and that the More family is "about to start a *communal* recitation of Our Lady's Matins," a practice that Duffy explains became increasingly common with the introduction of printed, and thus identical, *Hora*e (see figure 12).<sup>86</sup>



Figure 32. Hans Holbein's the More Family (1527).

But there is also a later incarnation of this image. Around 1600, More's grandson commissioned a copy of Holbein's original painting that included the introduction of

<sup>85</sup> For more on Hamond and his extensive manuscript collection, see M. Crum, "A Seventeenth-Century Collection of Music Belonging to Thomas Hamond, A Suffolk Landowner," *Bodleian Library Record* vi (1957): 373-86.

<sup>86</sup> Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570*, 58.

four descendants of the More family to Holbein's tableau. Tellingly, the artist, Rowland Lockey, also added a lute and viola da gamba, symbols both of music and domesticity (see figure 13). Rowland's painting thus captures a scene of domestic prayer, a communal reading from individual books that the artist's introduction of musical instruments reminds us is not far off from similar, and related, scenes of domestic consort playing.



Figure 33. Detail of Rowland Lockey's 'Sir Thomas More and his Family' showing a lute and viol.

### **The anthem, the *locus amoenus*, and Ingelo's *Bentivolio and Urania***

By the middle of the seventeenth century, scenes of domestic devotional music making with viols—the Protestant variant of Lockey's sixteenth-century tableau—would have featured the consort anthem. The quintessential Protestant expression of devotional music for viols, the consort anthem engaged continuing debates about the use of instruments in prayer and offered a humanist

reinterpretation of the liturgical legacy of consort playing. As the many early modern publications of domestic devotional chamber music (such as East's aforementioned four-part psalm harmonizations) attest, the household was "perceived by reformists of all sorts as a key forum—if not *the* key forum—for social and ideological change."<sup>87</sup> The consort anthem was the domestic cousin of the verse anthem—viols, forbidden in church by Reformers, offered a practical replacement for the organ, an instrument that only the wealthiest gentry would have possessed at home. The consort anthem is largely a product of the early decades of the seventeenth century, and John Morehen posits that both it and the verse anthem, one of the standard forms of Anglican liturgical music, evolved from the consort song.<sup>88</sup> The key feature that both the verse and consort anthem inherited from the consort song is the structure of a solo voice accompanied by a polyphonic instrumental texture. The innovation introduced by the anthem was the addition of alternating sections for chorus, a feature whose development "provided the central formal distinction between the verse anthem and consort anthem (apart from the question of organ versus viols) in that in verse anthems the choruses would have been sung by a full body of 18 or 20 singers, whereas in the consort anthem the choruses were intended for performance with one voice (and one viol) to a part. Thus the consort anthem was an intimate chamber form, the verse anthem a fully choral and public one."<sup>89</sup> There is a substantial surviving repertoire of consort

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<sup>87</sup> Patterson, *Domesticating the Reformation: Protestant Best Sellers, Private Devotion, and the Revolution of English Piety*, 39. For an extensive list of such publications, see Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549-1660*, 403.

<sup>88</sup> J. Morehen, "The English Consort and Verse Anthems," *Early Music* 6, no. 3 (1978): 383.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

anthems, both in manuscript and printed collections, by William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Tomkins, Martin Peerson, Thomas Ravenscroft, Michael East and others that attest to the popularity of this devotional music for voices and viols.

Devotional music for voices and viols, like much of the consort repertory treated in this dissertation, is territory well charted by archival musicology. The manuscript and printed sources of the repertory, the literary origins of the texts, and the social milieu that supported devotional music for voices and viols serve as the subject of several dissertations, numerous substantial articles, and at least one monograph.<sup>90</sup> I do not attempt to summarize or synthesize this work here, but instead offer a discussion of several Restoration literary treatments of the consort anthem, some of which constitutes material new to the scholarship, in order to show how music for voices and viols articulated a particular vision of Protestant community. Drawing on archival materials largely unnoticed by musicologists, I describe the musical circle of preacher, lawyer, and amateur musician John Worthington (1618-1671), a member of the Cambridge Platonists who kept a

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<sup>90</sup> Monson, *Voices and Viols in England, 1600-1650*; J. Bryan, "'Anthemes for Versus and Chorus...Apt for Viols and Voyces': The Development of the English Consort Anthem, with some Approaches to Performance Practice," in *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought*, ed. J. Paynter et al., vol. 2 (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); A. Hughes, "Continuity, Tradition and Change in English Music up to 1600," *Music and Letters* 46, no. 4 (1965): 306-315; Kerman, "The Elizabethan Motet: A Study of Texts for Music.," D. Mateer, *Songs of Sundrie Natures (1589)*, ed. P. Brett, vol. 13 (London: Stainer and Bell/Mateer, D., 2004); J. Milsom, "Songs, Carols and 'Contrafacta' in the Early History of the Tudor Anthem," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 107 (1980): 34-45; Milsom, "Sacred Songs in the Chamber.," Morehen, "The English Consort and Verse Anthems.," J. Morehen, "The English Anthem Text, 1549-1660," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 117, no. 1 (1992): 62-85; Patterson, *Domesticating the Reformation: Protestant Best Sellers, Private Devotion, and the Revolution of English Piety*; Ralph T. Daniel, "Contrafacta and Polyglot Texts in the Early English Anthem," in *Essays in Musicology: A Birthday Offering for Willi Apel*, ed. Hans Tischler (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University School of Music, 1968); Peter H. James, "A Study of the Verse Anthem from Byrd to Tomkins" (Ph.D., Wales: Cardiff University, 1968); Smith, "Music for Voices and Viols: A Contextual Study and Critical Performing Edition of Verse Anthems in Christ Church [Oxford] mss 56-60.," J.J. Heydon, "Martin Peerson's Private Musicke: A Transcription, Edition, and Study of an Early 17th-Century Collection of English Consort Songs" (University of Oregon, 1990).

detailed diary recording his numerous connections with consort enthusiasts such as Thomas Mace, composer Benjamin Rogers, and clergyman Nathaniel Ingelo. This literature, which originates in and around Cambridge from the 1660s and 70s, places the consort anthem in an imagined *locus amoenus*, a sequestered, idyllic locale of “fragrant gardens, shady woods, deep meadows and transparent floods.”<sup>91</sup> Through engaging this trope, I argue, such writing helps establish the consort anthem as part of the symbolic vocabulary of a nostalgic strain of Restoration Protestantism.

Throughout its history in Western art, the *locus amoenus* has served to dramatize the competing claims of the spiritual and the carnal to the sensual fecundity of nature. Pastoral scenes are often portrayed as erotic playgrounds; yet, as David Evett explains, “[a] sense of numen is apt to break through even the playboy fantasies of the *Carmina Burana* or the impotent voyeurism of Ovidian imitations. The full expressive force of the topos is exerted toward achieving some kind of moral seriousness.”<sup>92</sup> The “shady woods and deep meadows” of the *locus amoenus* invite an embodied experience that, like music, leads either towards the divine or the perils of sensual pleasure. Music, like the Arcadian setting in which it so commonly appears, threatens the loss of “spiritual Joyes in the allurements of audible pleasure, which is abus’d when it doth not serve to lift up the Soul more affectionately to God.”<sup>93</sup> This warning—uttered by Nathaniel Ingelo’s character Theosebes in the author’s romance *Bentivolio and Urania* (1660)—is a statement in

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<sup>91</sup> Andrew Marvell, *Miscellaneous poems by Andrew Marvell, Esq.* (London, 1681), 75.

<sup>92</sup> D. Evett, “Paradise’s Only Map’: The ‘Topos’ of the ‘Locus Amoenus’ and the Structure of Marvell’s ‘Upon Appleton House,’” *PMLA* 85, no. 3 (1970): 506.

<sup>93</sup> N. Ingelo, *Bentivolio and Urania in four bookes*, 1660, 245.

defense of music in devotion, an issue that was being contested with renewed vigor during the waning years of the Commonwealth. “Audible pleasure” was a risk particularly associated with the use of instruments in worship (as we saw in Morley above), and Puritan ideologues tended to reserve their most vitriolic condemnations for “concerted” music. There is a consensus among modern scholars that consort anthems were “private” music—that if performed in church as part of the liturgy, the viol parts would have been played by the organist. Yet the consort anthem seems to have remained a flashpoint for debates about the use of instruments in musical acts of praise. This explains in part, I believe, the repeated appearance of what appear to be consort anthems in literary treatments of the *locus amoenus*: both “concerted” devotional music and Arcadian grottos manifest a claim to embodied spirituality against Puritan repudiation of sensuality.

In his rambling memoir *A Forest Promiscuous of Several Seasons Productions* (1659), the elderly Dudley North described “Bansteds”, a

parcel of delectable grounds graced with intermixture of pastures, woods, meadows, opportunity for waters, standing and flowing which much affected me; where I made a little shelter or grange against rain...where are walks and seats to hear singing of Birds or voices.”<sup>94</sup>

*A Forest Promiscuous* provides numerous clues as to what sort music might have been sung in the old Baron’s *locus amoenus*. Jenkins spent many years in North’s

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<sup>94</sup> North, *A Forest Promiscuous of Several Seasons Productions*, 307.

service, and Margaret Crum has noted that manuscripts of viol consort music from Kirtling, the North estate in Cambridgeshire where Bansteds was located, are copied in the hands of Dudley and his grandchildren, several of whom were to grow up to write nostalgically about consort music.<sup>95</sup> *A Forest Promiscuous* suggests that the Baron had set the viol down for a couple decades during the tumultuous years of the Civil War, but that

after more than twenty years not touching an Instrument [God]  
restored me to take in hand for my pastime, (which hath proved a  
very usefull divertisement to me,) the Viol.<sup>96</sup>

North includes texts, though no music, to several “Bansted” songs composed by himself and by Jenkins. Though North is vague about their instrumentation, the texts specify an alternation between solo and choral sections and possess a devotional character appropriate to the consort anthem. Jenkins’ “Hasten thy pace”, a song “for a single, and after for divers voyces,” typifies the collection’s insistent self-reflexivity (the first-person lyrics invariably require that the singer or singers mention the act of singing and praying) and vaguely defensive assertion of probity.

*Solo*                      ...Our dayes and we are sure to find an end,

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<sup>95</sup> F. North, *A Philosophical Essay of Musick* (London, 1676); R. North and P. Millard, *Notes of me: the autobiography of Roger North* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); R. North and J. Wilson, *Roger North on music; being a selection from his essays written during the years c. 1695-1728* (London, Novello, 1959); North, *A Forest Promiscuous of Several Seasons Productions*; A.C.H. Pembroke and V. Sackville-West, *The diary of the Lady Anne Clifford* (New York, G.H. Doran, 1923).

<sup>96</sup> North, *A Forest Promiscuous of Several Seasons Productions*, 311.

Most happy they who them most fairly spend:  
 Some work, some plot discourse, some sing and play;  
 But Time goes then best for us when we pray.

*Chorus*       Thus runs our course, first Praying, then to Work,  
 Suffering no Idle Thoughts in us to lurk;  
 We weed them out as soon as they do spring,  
 So roles our Time, we Pray, we Work, we Sing.<sup>97</sup>

North's poetry reflects the conflicting registers of humanism and liturgy; he substitutes musical praise ("we Sing") for the third term of the medieval "three orders" of Godly society, an inheritance paraphrased as "we pray, we work, we *fight*."<sup>98</sup> The clergy prays, farmers toil, and soldiers fight to preserve the state, an earthly manifestation of Divine order. North's substitution of music as religiously motivated martial agent does not entirely deflect the sensuous connotations of harmonious singing in a garden, as his anxious promise to "suffer[] no idle thoughts" reveals. Liturgy, like music, has a martial connotation—it is the ritual deployment of Divine power, both a supplication and an assertion of an alliance with an omnipotent God. North eruditely asserts the martial authority of singing and playing, using medieval imagery that valorizes the power of liturgy, even as he envelopes his musicians (himself and members of his household) in a "promiscuous" garden. Another song in *A Forest Promiscuous*, whose text suggests a

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>98</sup> Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (Chicago, 1980), 5.



choral repetition at the end of each solo verse, playfully reinforces his defense of music in an Arcadian setting.

Fear not Nymphs no Satyr is here,  
 Nor lurking Serpent to affright you,  
 Birds melodious waters clear;  
 Thickets or plains may here delight you:  
 This another Tempe is,  
 No rude swain doth here reside;  
 Innocence of Rural Bliss;  
 Is the worst doth here abide:

*Repeat*      Answer then the Birds and sing,  
 Make the woods your echo ring.<sup>99</sup>

*Tempe* (“weather” in Latin) may here also reference the inscription “*Inopinata auspicio Divino Tempe*” that North mentions as adorning Bansted’s “little entertaining room.” Certainly, there is something fanciful in the old Baron’s description of Bansted’s, as there is in the image of his family and servants dragging a consort of instruments out into the woods to mingle devotional music with birdsong. Yet the sylvan “entertaining room” is a recurrent trope in Restoration consort music. Thomas Mace (1612/13-1706), the Cambridge singer, lute player, and writer on music, dedicated a section of *Musick’s Monument* (1676) to a

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<sup>99</sup> North, *A Forest Promiscuous of Several Seasons Productions*, 308.

discussion of an ideal “musick room” in which to hear and perform viol consort music. This freestanding room, which comes to resemble as much a temple as a performance space in Mace’s schematic (see figure 14), must be

Built in a Clear, and very Delightful Dry Place, both free from Water;  
the Over-Hanging of Trees; and Common Noises.<sup>100</sup>

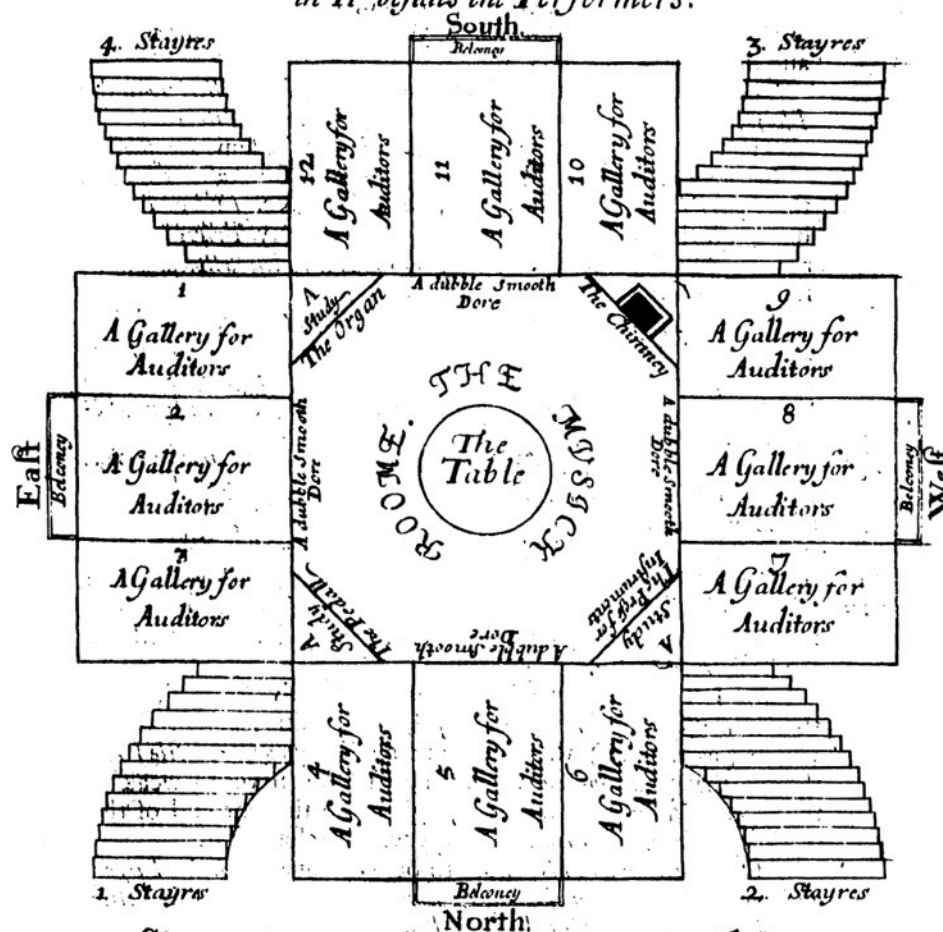
Preoccupied as it is with a nostalgic defense of Caroline consort music against the “giddy...and toyish conceits” of the French musical fashions that accompanied the Restoration, *Musick’s Monument* does not discuss devotional music for voices and viols, though Mace does conclude his book with several pages of “divine considerations.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> T. Mace, *Musick’s Monument* (London, 1676), 240.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

*The Description  
Of a Musick-Room, Uniforme  
With Conveniency for Severall Sorts of  
Auditors, Severally plac'd in 12  
Distinct Roomes, besides the Mu-  
sick-Room, w<sup>ch</sup> would haue none  
in It besides the Performers.*



*Supposing the Roome to be six Yeards Square  
The 12 Galleries would be 3 yeards long, and  
Better; The 4 Middle Galleries Somthing  
Broader then the Rest, as Here they are.*

Figure 34. Thomas Mace's "musick room" from *Musick's Monument* (1676).

A source of Restoration criticism on consort music previously unrecognized by musicologists, Nathaniel Ingelo's (1620/21–1683) best-selling romance

*Bentivolio and Urania* (1660) combines a defense of music in worship with frequent references to his favorite pastime, playing the viol. Ingelo, a Cambridge educated pastor and musician who later served as a dean of Eton, accompanied Bulstrode Whitelocke on the Swedish embassy of 1653-4 where he presented some compositions of consort music by Benjamin Rogers to Queen Kristina.<sup>102</sup> *Bentivolio and Urania*, published in two installments in 1660 and 1664, is a fictional narrative conceived, according to William McClellan, “in terms of the Platonic doctrine of the heterogeneity of the soul set out in Henry More’s long poem *Psychozoia* (1641).”<sup>103</sup> In one episode in the romance, the aforementioned Theosebes retires with his companions to a *locus amoenus*, a “Grotte which he had upon a clear River which ran through his Garden.”

When they were come thither, some of his chief Musicians, plac’d in a Room which he had built for such purposes, began to perform such select Musick as he had appointed for their entertainment. Amongst many other excellent Songs one was compos’d in defence of Church-Musick. There Harmony reveal’d the utmost power of its sweetnesse, not so much to please, as to produce those Effects which would witnesse its Usefulness in such applications.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> R. Rastall, “Benjamin Rogers (1614-98): Some Notes on His Instrumental Music,” *Music & Letters* 46, no. 3 (1965): 237; Ian William McLellan, “Ingelo, Nathaniel (1620/21-1683),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, n.d.

<sup>103</sup> McLellan, “Ingelo, Nathaniel (1620/21-1683).”

<sup>104</sup> Ingelo, *Bentivolio and Urania in four bookes*, 246.

Ingelo's description of harmony's capacity to "produce those Effects which would witness its Usefulness" echoes, however distantly, a conception of song as liturgy, as a musical enactment of God's word. The "power of its sweetness" recalls North's poetic adaptation of a medieval trope and his transposition of the martial "we fight" to "we sing."

And what was the music that Ingelo imagines performed in Theosebess' room "built for such purposes" (Ingelo's version of North's Bansteds and Mace's "musick room")? *Bentivolio and Urania* contains no notated music, but Ingelo provides the words to the song performed for Theosebess and his guests.

[Verse] I.      We sing to Him whose Wisdom form'd the Eare;  
                          Our Songs let Him who gave us Voices hear:  
                          We joy in God who is the Spring of Mirth,  
                          Whose Love's the Harmony of Heaven and Earth.  
                          Our humble Sonnetts shall that Praise rehearse  
                          Which is the Musick of the Universe.

CHORUS.      And whilst we sing we consecrate our Art,  
                          And offer up with every Tongue a Heart.

[Verse] II.      Thus whilst our Thoughts grow Audible in Words,  
                          And th' Body with the ravish'd Soul accords,  
                          We hallow Pleasure, and redeem the Voice

From vulgar Uses to serve noble Joyes.

Whilst hollow wood and well-tun'd Strings do give

Praises, the Dumb and Dead both speak and live.

CHORUS.      Thus whilst we sing we consecrate our Art,  
And offer up with every Tongue a Heart.<sup>105</sup>

The form of Ingelo's song—verses separated by choral refrains—and the explicit reference to viol playing in the second verse ("Whilst hollow wood and well-tun'd Strings do give Praises") suggest that Ingelo imagined the strains of music for voices and viols filling Theosebes' "grotte." John Worthington (1618-1671), a clergyman and amateur musician known primarily as an editor of the writings of philosophers John Smith and Joseph Mede, describes in his diary a circle of musicians in Cambridge that included Ingelo and that likely played music for voices and viols during the 1650s, the years just prior to the first publication of Ingelo's romance.<sup>106</sup> This circle included Mace, who gave Worthington voice and viol lessons in the 1640s, nobleman William Brereton, to whom Ingelo dedicated *Bentivolio and Urania*, composer Benjamin Rogers, for whom Ingelo secured a Bachelor of Music degree from Cambridge in 1658, Worthington's wife Mary Worthington nee Whichcote, and members of Mary's family including theologian Benjamin Whichcote, Worthington's tutor at Cambridge and an influential teacher of many of

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>106</sup> J. Crossley, *The Diary and Correspondence of John Worthington*, vol. 13 (Manchester: Crossley, J., 1847).

the Cambridge Platonists.<sup>107</sup> All of these consort enthusiasts, with the exception of Mary Worthington, about whom we know only the few details offered up in her husband's diary, were either clergy or, in the case of Rogers, established church musicians. Penelope Gouk describes the overlapping circles of natural philosophers and musicians in Oxford during the Commonwealth and Restoration, suggesting that the confluence of musical and scientific activities was a defining characteristic of that intellectual community.<sup>108</sup> It seems likely that Worthington's Cambridge circle, comprised of philosophers, theologians, and musicians, was equally shaped by the practical and theoretical music in its midst.

The poetry of Ingelo's song, "compos'd in defence of Church-Musick," argues, as had Hooker more than sixty years previously, for the redemptive power of music with instruments in worship. The first two verses comprise a list of the conventional benefits that devotional singing offers both the singers and God. Music opens a channel of communication with the divine ("Our Songs let Him who gave us Voices hear"), and at the same time serves as a metaphor for God's perfection ("the Harmony of Heaven and Earth). In the next verse, singing is shown to harmonize body and soul and redeem the voice "From vulgar Uses to serve noble Joyes." It is when instruments are mentioned that Ingelo, who as a young pastor antagonized his small Independent Bristol congregation by "his being given so much to Musick," departs from the usual encomia.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> P. Gouk, "Performance Practice: Music, Medicine, and Natural Philosophy in Interregnum Oxford," *The British Society for the History of Science* 29 (1996): 257-88.

<sup>109</sup> McLellan, "Ingelo, Nathaniel (1620/21-1683)."

...Whilst hollow wood and well-tun'd Strings do give  
Praises, the Dumb and Dead both speak and live.

Ingelo's lines offer a powerful image of the use of instruments in praise—that the “hollow wood and well-tun'd Strings,” serve an essential symbolic role as fragile and imperfect—though “tuneable”—participants in God's harmony. Instruments are silent and “disordered” until they are played, and it is precisely their *inarticulateness*—when compared to voices—that gives them value. The act of bringing forth “praises” from the “hollow wood” of viols offers a metaphor for God's redemption of Man: as a musician coaxes sound from “well-tun'd Strings,” so God allows the “dumb and dead [to] speak and live.” “Humane Nature,” Theosebes states, “was well strung and exactly tun'd by him that made it.”<sup>110</sup> Like the viols in Thomas Greaves' “When I behold” that act as metaphorical congregants to the celebrant singer, the instruments in Ingelo's imagined consort serve as a powerful image of the imperfection of the devoted soul. Thus the consort anthem is figured here as enacting, in an Arcadian setting, the fundamental Christian narrative of redemption, one that requires a model of imperfection, an instrument to be “more exactly tun'd” by God. By the 1660s, the heyday of the viol consort was passed, and one detects a distinct note of Royalist nostalgia in the writings of North, Mace, and Ingelo. Such work, which sets ensembles of voices and viols in Arcadian fantasies of an idyllic spiritual past, certainly helped establish a topos: a century later, Handel's aria

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<sup>110</sup> Ingelo, *Bentivolio and Urania in four bookes*, 217.



*V'adoro pupille* from Giulio Cesare would be accompanied onstage by a viol and other instruments in a “garden of cedars”.

## Conclusion

Ingelo's wistful encomium to music for viols and voices, with which the clergyman and his circle “[did] imitate the Heavenly Quires, And with High Notes lift up more Rais'd Desires,” represents the last rays of a tradition that had intimately connected music for viol consort with communal, domestic devotion. From its origins in Sarum polyphony, a musical language conceived to ornament and answer (as alternatim) musical utterances of sacred chant, to its appropriation by Reformers as a vehicle for domestic psalm settings, the viol consort retained its “devotional” connotations. This remained true even when the repertory was, as in the case of the fantasia (if not the dance suite), strategically stripped of its “liturgical” associations. Collections like Dowland's *Lachrimae*, which presents seven 5-part pavans representing progressively more sacred tears, or Michael East's set of eight 5-part fantasias, each bearing a Latin title that charts the redemption of a sinner, reveal those composers' sense that a consort of viols was the most suitable vehicle for devotional instrumental music.<sup>111</sup> Both East and Dowland, like nearly every professional composer of consort music, were trained in a pedagogical tradition that retained many of the stylistic markers, such as the use of plainsong cantus firmus, of Sarum liturgical polyphony. As the plainsong canon treatises from

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<sup>111</sup> M. East, *The Third Set of Bookes: wherein are Pastorals, Anthemes, Neapolitanes, Fancies, and Madrigales, apt both for Viols and Voyces*, (London, 1610).

the turn of the seventeenth century show, not only did the conservative musical style of Catholic ritual music persist in the training of choristers, but something of the ritual *meanings* of that style lingered in the repetition and memorization of Sarum chant melodies.

The Reformation preoccupation with the audibility and accessibility of the Word, as well as polarizing debates about the suitability of instruments in worship, inflected the consort repertory's native tendency to incorporate vocal music. Morley's representative denial of the power of music "leaving out the dittie" was answered by Hooker's equally representative assertion that harmony itself was a form of praise. In the context of acts of musical devotion, questions about an instrument's capacity to "signify," in the words of Cotton above, were figured as allegorical for human imperfection. In the sixteenth century, the consort song dramatized these issues by placing an elect singer among a consort of viols whose bows nobly attempted to imitate the sacred petitions of the voice. A century later, Ingelo's imagined consort anthems offered a vision of the noble failure of instrumental speech, one that sought a particular beauty in its harmonious capacity for redemption. Though human speech alone could fully express God's word, Du Bartas reminds us of the Renaissance understanding of what Christopher Field called the "wordless eloquence of bowed strings:"

Our Tongue's the Bowe, our Teeth the trembling Strings,  
Our hollow Nostrils (with their double vent)

the hollow Belly of the Instrument<sup>112</sup>

Du Bartas' "tongue" and "teeth," like the lush garden in which Ingelo sets his romance, suggest the sensuality that made music both so powerful and so dangerous to Reformers. My next chapter invites to the surface the sensuality and intimacy of consort playing that is barely contained by Ingelo's invocation of prayer and celebration above. Just as the period of this dissertation saw profound changes in religious ideology and practice, it also witnessed transformations in the nexus of attitudes and behaviors connected with sexuality and gender performance. My final chapter places the homosocial viol consort in the midst of these changes, and interrogates how polyphony staged interactions of pleasure, intimacy, and power among its male players.

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<sup>112</sup> Quoted in G.L. Finney, "A World of Instruments," *ELH* 20, no. 2 (1953): 112.

## V

## “Musique fitting for the place”: The (Homo)Eroticism of the Viol Consort

In a gesture that would have been winkingly familiar to early modern consort enthusiasts, amateur musician and antiquarian Peter Leycester (1614-1678) described his viol as a lover, and his musical union with it as the perfect confluence of “harmony and love.”

Come Sweete Companion, Solace of my life,  
 Asswager of my Cares, another wife,  
 Let us retire into some Shady Place,  
 Where with my circling thighs I may embrace  
 And gently hugge thee, till thy trembling strings  
 Cause the Sweete friskind ayre to dance and singe:[...]  
 Oh I could with the Sportes of all our leasure  
 Might like the Spheres move in Eternall pleasure.  
 Embleme of Heaven! Fit for the feasts of Jove,  
 Where's nothinge else but harmony and Love.<sup>1</sup>

Adopting a vocabulary of pastoral eroticism, Leycester's poem registers the intimate physicality of playing the viol and the sensual pleasures of making music. While the poem imagines the private intimacy between one performer and his “sweete

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Doug Freundlich, the lutenist and microfilm librarian at Harvard's Loeb Music Library, for drawing my attention to this poem in Leycester's diary. (P[eter] L[eycester] “Poems and Characters” Manuscript [16--], Chester Records Office.)

companion,” the viol was principally an ensemble instrument in the decades before the Civil War, and the social configuration of the consort offered fertile soil for the erotics of Leycester’s verse. Playing consort music brings participants together in interactions that are at once “musical” and “social.” The style assumes congruence between player and part, such that idiomatic and artful voice leading choreographs the relationship of bodies to each other even as it responds to the exigencies of counterpoint. “Musical performance,” Cusick writes, “is partly (but not entirely) the culturally intelligible performance of bodies.”<sup>2</sup> Bodies in proximity invite intimacy and sensuality. Intimacy and sensuality entail power—mastery, for example, or loss of control. Bodies in proximity—the literal, physical proximity of the circle of players in a viol consort as well as the virtual, “musical” proximity of harmony and imitation—require management, discipline, interpretation. Intimacy and pleasure must be negotiated, channeled into recognizable forms of discourse, as Foucault might say. This chapter examines the ways that consort music was crafted to excite and manage the pleasure, intimacy, and power of (musical) bodies in proximity.

The bodies in question were normatively male, and what follows will seek to map instrumental chamber music onto the complex topography of early modern homosociality and homoeroticism. Archival material tells us that women played the viol, too, but evidence suggests that consort music’s overwhelmingly male composers, patrons, and enthusiasts imagined it as a male domain, an activity

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<sup>2</sup> S.G. Cusick, “On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex,” in *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, ed. E. Barkin and L. Hamessley (Zurich and Los Angeles: Carciofoli Verlagshaus, 1999), 27.

“between men,” to borrow Eve Sedgwick’s phrase.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Linda Austern has chronicled the extent to which women’s musical activities were limited by a culture that tended to eroticize—and police—female music making in the presence of male auditors (or musical “partners”).<sup>4</sup> Female “difference,” both in the form of actual women—wives, for example, in the model of companionate marriage that offered competing ideologies of marital sexuality—as well as “music” as metaphorically female, subtends my discussion of the male homoeroticism of consort playing. Indeed, (female) gender difference complicates the “equality”—a concept theorized by Laurie Shannon as “homonormativity”—that serves to guide the cultural trajectories I explore in this chapter.<sup>5</sup>

Since the publication of Alan Bray’s groundbreaking *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (1982), the historiography of Renaissance England has served as an important testing ground for Queer theory and other approaches attentive to the history of conceptions of sex, gender, and power.<sup>6</sup> Among the most influential writers in this coterie, which include Bray, Sedgwick, Bruce Smith, Mario Digangi, and Jonathan Goldberg, a rough consensus has emerged about the nature of literary

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<sup>3</sup> For an account of women’s participation in seventeenth-century English music, see Austern’s work cited elsewhere in this dissertation as well as Hohl Trillini Regula, *The Gaze of the Listener* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008). For discussion of evidence of women playing consort music, see Laura Youens, “‘Touched by more than mortal hand’: Susanna Perwich,” *Orbis musicae: Studies in musicology*, no. 12 (1998): 262; A. Ashbee, “‘My Fiddle is a Bass Viol’: Music in the life of Sir Roger L’Estrange,” in *Sir Roger L’Estrange and the Making of Restoration Culture*, ed. A. Dunan-Page and B. Lynch (Ashgate, 2008); Lynn Hulse and Andrew Ashbee, “Musical apprenticeship in noble households,” in *John Jenkins and his time: Studies in English consort music* (Oxford University Press, 1996); Margaret Crum, “The Consort Music from Kirtling, Bought for the Oxford Music School from Anthony Wood, 1667,” *Chelys* iv (1972): 3-10.

<sup>4</sup> L.P. Austern, “‘Sing Againe Syren’: The Female Musician and Sexual Enchantment in Elizabethan Life and Literature,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (1989): 434.

<sup>5</sup> Laurie Shannon, “Nature’s Bias: Renaissance Homonormativity and Elizabethan Comic Likeness,” *Modern Philology* 98, no. 2 (2000): 183-210.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

representations of male homosociality in the English Renaissance.<sup>7</sup> This consensus, which frames my account of consort playing as a vehicle for the homosociality and homoerotic desire, runs something like this: Relationships between men in Renaissance England reflected a much more tentative mapping between (sexual) behavior and identity, and thus managed intimacy and erotic energy in ways profoundly different from their modern counterparts.

“In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,” Bruce Smith writes, “sexuality was not, as it is for us, the starting place for anyone’s self-definition.”<sup>8</sup> Sexual behavior signified differently in relation to identity, and identity was charted using a different map—one that did not so cleanly divide the territory of sexual behavior into “heterosexual” vs. “homosexual.” “There was a breadth in the concepts used,” Bray explains, “that should put us on our guard. We need to carry our preconceptions lightly if we are to see in Renaissance England more than the distorted image or ourselves.”<sup>9</sup> In a move that has largely set the terms of subsequent scholarship, Bray identified this “breadth [of] concepts” of identity as clustering between two images of men in relation to other men, images “that exercised a compelling grip on the imagination of sixteenth-century England, if the many references to them are a reliable guide to its dreams and fears.” “One is the image of the masculine friend,” Bray continues, “The other is the figure called the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.; E.K. Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); B.R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); M. Digangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jonathan Goldberg, *Queering the Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 17.

sodomite.”<sup>10</sup> The English Renaissance abounds in representations of male homosocial relationships, and Bray’s two images serve as a useful heuristic for modern scholars. Friendship—also referred to variously as “acquaintance,” “amity” (which sometimes connoted the eroticism that makes the study Renaissance homosociality so confusing), and a host of other terms—was valorized. Sodomy, according to Smith, sent the minds of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century speakers of English “spinning toward heterodoxies of all sorts: sorcery, religious heresy, treason.”<sup>11</sup> The stakes were high. Sodomy was punishable by death, but the importance of friendship cannot be overstated. As Richard Braithwaite says in *The English Gentleman* (1630), a tract that indebted is to Montaigne’s essay on friendship published in English translation in 1603,

...men, whether in prosperitie or adversitie, wanting friends to relie on, are wretched and helpelesse: So as there is no greater wilderness than to be without true friends. For without friendship, societie is but meeting, acquaintance a formall or ceremoniall greeting.<sup>12</sup>

The problem that faces modern scholars of Renaissance sexuality is interpreting early modern texts in terms that respond to the divergent trajectories of the masculine friend versus the sodomite without forcing these representations into the nearly irresistible modern categories of “heterosexual” versus

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<sup>10</sup> A. Bray, “Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England,” in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. J. Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 40.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman* (London, 1630), 243.



“homosexual.” Yet the texts themselves often frustrate both these efforts. Bray’s two images are often not easily distinguishable. “In their uncompromising symmetry,” he observes, “they paralleled each other in an uncanny way.”<sup>13</sup> So, for example, Braithwaite’s chapter on “acquaintance,” from which the passage above is excerpted, is prefaced with an emblem that depicts a passionate embrace between two men (see figure 1) whose declaration of their love (*‘Certus amor morum est’*) is captured by *one* “speech bubble” emerging from both their mouths, a univocality that echoes the author’s characterization of friendship as “one soule ruling two hearts, or one heart dwelling in two bodies.”<sup>14</sup> Patterson identifies this image as falling into “an early modern tradition of homoerotic friendship, or amity.”<sup>15</sup> “Amity,” he continues “did not avoid the implication that deep friendships might have an erotic component[,] but constructed same-sex desire in ways that made it commensurate with civic conduct and aristocratic ideals.”<sup>16</sup> Amity, as Patterson defines it (early modern usages are neither as uniform nor as clear he suggests), provides a useful model for understanding a wide range of Renaissance texts, from Erasmus’ erotically-charged letters to other men anthologized in his widely influential treatise *De conscribendis epistolis* to Shakespeare’s sonnets to the “fair youth” to, I argue, consort music.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bray, “Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England,” 40.

<sup>14</sup> Braithwaite, *The English Gentleman*, 283.

<sup>15</sup> S. Patterson, “The Bankruptcy of Homoerotic Amity in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1999): 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> See F.T. Stevens, “Erasmus’s ‘Tigress’: The Language of Friendship, Pleasure, and the Renaissance letter,” in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. J. Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994); Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*.



Figure 35. “Acquaintance” from Richard Braithwaite’s *The English Gentleman* (1630)

Yet, as Mario Digangi observes, most of the scholarship on Renaissance male homoeroticism has fixated on sodomy, a fact reflecting modern political and cultural agendas and that likely overemphasizes its importance in early modern understandings of passionate friendship between men. “The kind of extensive, detailed analysis that Renaissance scholars have devoted to the category of sodomy has yet to be applied to homoerotic relations generally,” Digangi notes. In *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (1997), he calls for scholarship on alternative manifestations of sexuality, work that will “dislodg[e] the hegemonic status of sodomy as an explanatory theory and imaginary referent for early modern homoeroticism.”<sup>18</sup> Recent scholarship on male homoeroticism has continued to respond to Foucault’s decoupling of identity from sexual practice as well as Bray’s

<sup>18</sup> Digangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 12.

complexly-related categories of the “passionate friend” and the “sodomite.”<sup>19</sup> In *The Friend* (2003), Bray clarifies and further historicizes male intimacy in the form of “sworn brotherhood,” chronicling strategies through which pre- and early modern people distinguished and articulated the boundary between the masculine friend and the sodomite.<sup>20</sup> Other writers, such as Tom MacFaul and David Halperin, have gone the other way, *eliding* Bray’s terms with readings of English literature and drama that reveal the circulation of erotic and emotional intimacy *within* the category of “friendship.”<sup>21</sup> Additionally, this work has revealed complex mappings between identity and eroticism that complicate Foucault’s paradigmatic narrative of the development of sexuality.<sup>22</sup>

In the spirit of Digangi’s call, above, this chapter offers an account of consort music as an activity that staged interactions of pleasure, intimacy, and power between men; interactions “commensurate with civic conduct and aristocratic ideals” that occupied the contested territory between Bray’s “passionate friend” and “sodomite.” Consort music for viols sits at the juncture of several traditions that possess their own nuanced sexual histories, and my project is in part an attempt to disentangle the multiple valences of these various influences. I start with the viol itself, and describe a Renaissance literary and dramatic tradition that employed the

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<sup>19</sup> Katherine Crawford, “Privilege, Possibility, and Perversion: Rethinking the Study of Early Modern Sexuality,” *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 2 (2006): 413.

<sup>20</sup> Alan Bray, *The Friend* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Tom MacFaul, *Male friendship in Shakespeare and his contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); David M. Halperin, “Introduction: Among Men—History, Sexuality, and the Return of Affect,” in *Love, sex, intimacy, and friendship between men, 1550-1800*, ed. Katherine O’Donnell and Michael O’Rourke (Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Ian Frederick Moulton, “Studies in Early Modern Sexuality,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2004): 481-7; Tom Betteridge, ed., *Sodomy in early modern Europe* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002); Shannon, “Nature’s Bias.”

<sup>22</sup> Denise A. Walen, “Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama,” *Theatre Journal* 54, no. 3 (2002): 411-430.

instrument as a symbol of male homoerotic desire. From there I turn to the madrigals and consort music of John Ward (c.1589-1638), a composer whose work exemplifies the stylistic appropriation to instrumental music of the sophisticated musical erotics of the Italian madrigal. Finally, I offer a close reading of an episode of duets in one of William White's (1571–c.1634) six-part fantasias. In the context of consort music's origin in the institutions of English choral music, the duets in White's fantasia exemplify the range of homosocial trajectories suggested by the figure of "imitation." I end with Thomas Mace, whose nostalgic Restoration account of consort music registers an early modern anxiety about the homoerotics of viol playing from the vantage point of changing conceptions of male homosociality.

### **The Viol as (Homo)Erotic Symbol**

Peter Leycester's amatory poem to his viol with which this chapter begins is a newly discovered example of a tradition of Elizabethan poetry and drama that makes of the instrument a sexual symbol. However, the poem also registers, with Leycester's use of the phrase "another wife," the important ideological and metaphorical force of marriage and marital sexuality. Indeed, marriage as discussed in manuals, sermons, and tracts and represented in Elizabethan and Jacobean comedy served as a site of contestation of gender roles and sexual practices and revealed fissures in conceptions of male superiority as a keystone of the ordered

Christian state.<sup>23</sup> Marriage, according to Heather Dubrow, was praised for providing “companionship and solace, preventing sin (especially fornication), and encouraging procreation.”<sup>24</sup> Yet Protestant conceptions of marriage, as revealed, for example, in the writings of John Donne and John Milton, continued to express an unease with the institution as a “physic” for men and women who were unable to live in the more “Godly” condition of celibacy.<sup>25</sup> In this context, the male homoeroticism of the consort registers as both a potential threat to and respite from the sanctioned—yet ambivalent—environment of marital sexuality. The implied “equality” of the sexes suggested by marital concepts such “due benevolence,” in which either member of the couple could petition the other for sex, existed in tension with inherited notions of male superiority and the “perfection” of male friendship.<sup>26</sup> While most of the material I discuss in this chapter is primarily concerned with *male* homosociality, it is important to register the competing—and sometimes contradictory—claims of early modern ideas about marriage and marital sexuality.

Like Leycester, numerous writers including Shakespeare, Johnson, Marston, Middleton, Drayton, and others exploited the viol’s curvaceous form and the nexus

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<sup>23</sup> Heather Dubrow, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); Kari Boyd McBride, *Domestic arrangements in early modern England* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2002); Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and love in England: modes of reproduction, 1300-1840* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); James Turner, *One flesh: paradisaical marriage and sexual relations in the age of Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Shannon, “Nature’s Bias.”; Raymond B. Waddington, “Marriage in Early Modern Europe,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, no. 2 (July 1, 2003): 315-318; Linda T. Fitz, “‘What Says the Married Woman’: Marriage Theory and Feminism in the English Renaissance,” *Mosaic* 13, no. 2 (1980); Alan MacFarlane, “Review of THE FAMILY, SEX AND MARRIAGE IN ENGLAND 1500-1800. By Lawrence Stone. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.” *History and Theory* 18, no. 1 (1979): 103-126.

<sup>24</sup> Dubrow, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium*, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Turner, *One flesh*, 115; Dubrow, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium*, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Fitz, “‘What Says the Married Woman’: Marriage Theory and Feminism in the English Renaissance,” 8.

of suggestive possibility that surrounded “fiddling” and the stylized erotics of social music making. Gustav Ungerer, Gordon Williams, and C.R. Wilson have documented many (though not all) of the sexualized appearances of the viol in English literature of the period, material that offers an important backdrop to questions about the sexual politics of the consort.<sup>27</sup> Despite the impressive breadth of these scholars’ knowledge of literary sources, their work does not interrogate what these sources can teach us about early modern conceptions of sex, gender, and music.<sup>28</sup> Ungerer, for example, finds in his sources nothing more than a curiously antiseptic “disparaging meaning” and “derision” for the “indecent posture” of amateur viol players. A more careful reading, as I’ll show, reveals the viola da gamba as a symbol of transgressive sexuality, and in particular sexuality whose transgressiveness turns on a subversion of gender. Of particular interest for this chapter is the extent to which, in literature from the decades surrounding the turn of the seventeenth century, the viol seems to have crystalized a specific set of anxieties about homoeroticism and male homosociality.

The master trope, as it were, of sexualized references to the viol positions the instrument as a genital surrogate—“fiddling” on an instrument held “between [the] thighs” was simply too suggestive an image for satirists to ignore.<sup>29</sup> Ungerer traces this conceit as far back as Giovan Francesco Straparola’s *Le piacevoli notti* (c. 1555),

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<sup>27</sup> Gustav Ungerer, “The viola da gamba as a sexual metaphor in Elizabethan music and literature,” *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 8, no. 20 (May 1984): 79; Gordon Williams, *A dictionary of sexual language and imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart literature* (London, 1994); C.R. Wilson, “Shakespeare’s ‘Fair Viols, Sweet Lutes, and Rude Pipes’ as Symbolic Musics,” *Lute News* 48 (1999): 12-17.

<sup>28</sup> Ungerer’s essay just predates the efflorescence of scholarship initiated by Alan Bray and others in the 1980s and 90s and others that sought to theorize sex and gender in Renaissance England.

<sup>29</sup> See Williams’ extensive collection of slang uses of the term “fiddle” in Williams, *A dictionary of sexual language and imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart literature*, 479.

in which the blue-eyed lady-in-waiting Lodovica demurely tells a riddle that plays on the imagery of placing an instrument between her thighs and the “to and fro” movement of her bow hand that can “make you faint through too much love.”<sup>30</sup> One trajectory of this conceit, to which I’ll return later, is the suggested equivalence between playing music, masturbation, and same-sex sexual object choice. In the meantime, however, nearly any of the numerous early modern references to the instrument as sexual symbol play on its location between the legs and the double entendre of the phrase “to play upon.” John Marston’s satiric miniature epic poem, for example, *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion’s Image* (1598) derides one Briscus, presumably a classmate (Marston entered the Middle Temple in 1595), for lavishing attention on his “instrument.”

Come Briscus, by the soule of Complement,  
I’ll not endure that with thine instrument  
(Thy Gambo violl plac’d betwixt thy thighes.  
Wherein the best part of thy courtship lyes)  
Thou entertaine the time, thy Mistres by.<sup>31</sup>

Along the same lines, scholars in Thomas Middleton’s *Your Five Gallants* (c. 1605) congregate in a brothel disguised as a music school, where they meet “sometimes in every corner of the house, with their viols between their legs, and play the sweetest strokes.” “Consorting” of this sort also occurs in another of Middleton’s plays, *A*

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<sup>30</sup> Ungerer, “The viola da gamba as a sexual metaphor in Elizabethan music and literature,” 80.

<sup>31</sup> J. Marston, *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion’s Image: And Certain Satires* (London, 1598).

*Trick To Catch the Old One* (1608), in which one Onesiphorus Hoard crows that his niece “now remains in London...to learn fashions, practise music; the voice between her lips, and the viol between her legs; she’ll be fit for a consort very speedily.”<sup>32</sup> These examples acknowledge the viol consort as a potential erotic zone, one that operates in counterpoint, in the case of the latter, with the idiom of marital sexuality.

Middleton’s city comedies were popular among the young men of the Inns of Court (Middleton was a member of Gray’s Inn), an environment that featured the inevitable excess of sexual energy generated by a community of young, unmarried adult males and in which playing the viol was a popular pastime. Middleton, Marston, Ben Johnson, John Davies and other young writers from the Inns of Court published material that cheekily substituted viol playing for “venery.”<sup>33</sup> Johnson’s *Every Man Out of His Humor* (1600), for example, features an elaborate scene involving a tobacco pipe that refuses to light and a viol that won’t stay in tune (players of the instrument will appreciate this touch of *vérité*!). When the court lady Saviola finally sits to play the viol, the courtier Fastidius Brisk (related, perhaps, to Marston’s Briscus, above?) initiates this predictable pair of quips with his friend Macilente.

Fastidius:     You see the subject of her sweet fingers there? Oh shee tickles  
                          it so, that shee makes it laugh most Diuinely; I’le tell you a good

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<sup>32</sup> Ungerer, “The viola da gamba as a sexual metaphor in Elizabethan music and literature,” 87.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.



jeast now...I haue wisht my selfe to be that Instrument (I  
thinke) a thousand times, and not so few, by Heauens

Macilente: Not vnlike Sir: but how? to be cas'd vp and hung by on the  
wall?

An instrument that is “hung by” on the wall will also need to be “take[n] down,” a transitive phrase that also referred to the sexual gratification of a man.<sup>34</sup> In a famous exchange that plays on this constellation of viol-related double entendres, Moll Cutpurse exclaims in *The Roaring Girl* (1611), “Though the world judge impudently of me, I ne’er came into that chamber yet where I took down the instrument myself.” Her interlocutor’s response registers the by then conventionally risqué connotations of playing the viol: “There be a thousand close dames that will call the viol an unmannerly instrument for a woman and therefore talk broadly of thee.”<sup>35</sup>

These quotations reveal a slippage between the viol as genital surrogate and the viol as male lover or rival. Johnson’s Fastidius Brisk, for example, observes how the lady Saviola “tickles it so,” but his “jeast” expresses a desire to substitute his “selfe” for the viol between Saviola’s legs. This transposition is relevant for two reasons. The first is that a convention that genders the viol male—by virtue of its proximity to female thighs and its receptivity to “unmannerly” manual

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<sup>34</sup> Williams, *A dictionary of sexual language and imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart literature*, “fiddle.”

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The roaring girle. Or Moll Cut-Purse* (London, 1611).

ministrations—implicates male players in a sort of symbolic musical sodomy. Marston's play *The Malcontent* (1604), for example, begins with a comedic episode in which actor William Sly asks one Sinklo to "come...sit betweene my legges heare." Sinklo replies, "No indeede coosin, the audience then will take me for a viol de gambo, and thinke that you play vpon me."<sup>36</sup> The second has to do with the symbolic economy of *synecdoche*, that ubiquitous Renaissance concept and literary practice that here figures the phallus as a representation of the male lover. In the polyvalent imagery of musical instrument as phallus/lover/rival, the viol is a "member" of the body—a sort of erotic homunculus—and simultaneously one voice in an erotic consort of the two (or more) lovers—the "player" and the "instrument" between her (or his) legs. Drayton's ninth sonnet from the 1599 edition of his *Idea* turns on such complexly interwoven synecdoche: that of the "instrument" as body and the body itself as musical consort.

Love once would daunce within my Mistres eye,  
 And wanting musique fitting for the place,  
 Swore that I should the Instrument supply,  
 And sodainly presents me with her face:  
 Straightways my pulse playes lively in my vaines,  
 My panting breath doth keepe a meaner time,  
 My quav'ring artiers be the Tenours straynes,  
 My trembling sinewes serve the Counterchime,

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<sup>36</sup> John Marston and John Webster, *The malcontent* (London, 1604).

My hollow sighs the deepest base doe beare,  
 True diapazon in distincted sound:  
 My panting hart the treble makes the ayre,  
 And descants finely on the musiques ground;  
 Thus like a lute or Violl did I lye,  
 Whilst the proud slave daunc'd galliards in her eye.<sup>37</sup>

This is a sexual encounter graphically described though musical and organological metaphor. The key to Drayton's sonnet is the eye/vagina pun, which radically shifts the locus of the poem's breathlessly narrated present-tense action from the face to the genitals.<sup>38</sup> Drayton's poem uses the image of a consort to map the intense bodily subjectivity of the aroused narrator. Each symptom of his excitement is figured in the specialized language of musical polyphony. Voice parts ("mean[er]," "tenour," "base," and "treble") are interspersed with a surprisingly thorough list of technical musical terms ("keep [...] time," "quavr[ing]," "straynes," "counterchime," "diapazon," "ayre" and "ground"). Drayton's sonnet demands a familiarity with ensemble music making—one necessary, I believe, to make sense of its complicated use of musical imagery to represent sexually aroused subjectivity.

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<sup>37</sup> Michael Drayton, *Englands heroicall epistles. Nevvly enlarged. VVith Idea* (London, 1599), sonnet 9.

<sup>38</sup> The LeStrange Jestbook, discussed extensively in my chapter on wit, contains a representative example: "Sir Rob: Crane, a Gentleman very prone to Venerie; and one that declin'd few that came in his way, fitt for that Sport; mett with a good handsome, but notable bold wench, at Bury; who finding by his Play what manner of Gamster he was; I have heard sayes she, That a Crane is a most Dangerous Bird for Picking out of the Eyes; Faith, sayes she, I have one Eye Ile venter (indigitans ventrem) with your Long Bill, Picke what you can." Nicholas Le Strange, *Merry passages and jeasts: a manuscript jestbook* (Salzburg :, 1974), 155. See also Ungerer, "The viola da gamba as a sexual metaphor in Elizabethan music and literature," 89; Williams, *A dictionary of sexual language and imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart literature*, 453.

Drayton's narrator is fragmented by erotic intensity. The first person pronoun disappears after the third line, replaced by a string of possessive "my"s. No longer a unified subject, he becomes a quivering, trembling collection of parts and symptoms vying for his overwrought attention.<sup>39</sup> His "instrument" is variously his viol, his phallus, his self, and his entire body—elements that are poetically delaminated, blown apart by the "musique" of the encounter. Sex, in Drayton's account, catalyzes the peculiar experience of synecdoche, of being simultaneously "whole" and comprised of "parts." The consort, like the body, is a collection of independent agents that coordinate to create a "whole." Music, according to Drayton's poem, is to the consort as sex is to the body; it energizes the curious space between individual agents and the corporation of the ensemble. Music courses among the players in a consort like erotic energy through the parts of the body, binding them together as it heightens their awareness of themselves as variegated parts of an indivisible whole.

Drayton's sonnet suggests a nuanced vision of ensemble music making, one sensitive to subtle homologies between music and erotic energy and to the ways these forces mediate between "parts" and a "whole."<sup>40</sup> It is one of several surviving contemporaneous representations of consort playing (vocal and instrumental) that traffic in sexual excess (recall the "consorting" of Middleton's scholars and Onesiphorus Hoard's niece, above). Pietro Aretino's pornographic *Ragionamenti* (Dialogues), published in Italian in England by John Wolfe in 1585 and reissued in

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<sup>39</sup> For another poem that figures the "selfe" as a viol consort, see the Taylor epigram in my introductory chapter.

<sup>40</sup> McClary's related observation about Arcadelt's *Il bianco e dolce signor* attends to the madrigal's use of erotic imagery to represent a complexly multi-voiced erotic subjectivity, a reading that privileges a sort of literary *gestalt* over the experiences of individual singers.

1597, “deals frankly,” according to K.E. Borris, “with same-sex sexual behaviors, and with masculine desires for insertive anal intercourse, whether with males or females.”<sup>41</sup> In the first *Dialogue*, Aretino’s female prostitute Nanna likens a scene of creatively diverse group sex set in a convent to ensemble music making. At the climactic moment the participants, “four sisters, the General, and three milk-white and ruddy young friars,” agree to “cry out with one voice, like choristers harmonize, or more truly, as blacksmiths pound hammers...With voices murmuring and moaning aloud, it seemed like musical runs of sol, fa, re, mi, do.”<sup>42</sup> While the musical references are not specific to amateur chamber music, the image of half a dozen participants “cry[ing] out” the syllables of the descending pentachord—one even imagines the proper distribution of vocal ranges among the “four sisters, the General, and three...friars”!—would have easily conjured for English readers images of profligate Italian madrigal singing.

Earlier in Aretino’s scene of group sex “the General” is described as making “the same wry face that the marble figure in the Vatican belvedere makes at the serpents strangling him between his sons,” an image recalled by William Cranford’s catch about ensemble singing, first published in Playford’s *Music and Mirth* (1651).

Pray listen to the base,

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<sup>41</sup> K.E. Borris, *Same-Sex Desire in the English Renaissance: A Sourcebook of Texts, 1470-1650* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 355. Johnson, whose suggestive repartee involving a viol and several Italian interlocutors is quoted above, partly based his play *Epicoene* (1609) on another of Aretino’s pornographic works, *Il marescalco* (The Stablemaster).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

Least he doe us disgrace:  
 I feare the lout, will first be out  
 he makes such a beastly face.

This very excerpt, in fact, is jotted on the back page of the bassus (GB Ob. Ms.Mus.f.24) volume of Thomas Hamond's partbooks of consort music, discussed at length in my chapters on melancholy and devotion.

These representations of the viol make of the instrument a symbol of sexual excess, a token of the erotic exploits—particularly—of the young men of the Inns of Court—a demographic that would grow up to become the repertory's chief proponent during the Jacobean and Caroline "golden age." Homoerotic desire emerges as one of the principle forms of sexual excess in this material, a fact that both registered and contributed to the erotic energy, welcome or not, that was understood to effervesce just below the surface of consort playing.

Certainly several of the quotations above symbolically implicate the viol in same-sex sexual scenarios, but even those—such as Drayton's sonnet—that describe *heterosexual* encounters can suggest a complex male homoeroticism. Drayton's poem is about the experience of the narrator, and the most intimate relationship it enacts is actually between him and the reader. This (presumably male) reader is brought into an intense intimacy with the male narrator, an intimacy that is only partially contained by the female body, the "eye," that is the sonnet's supposed referent. E.K. Sedgwick powerfully theorized the homoerotic dimension of

this male-male relationship in her discussion of the “fair youth” of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

My point is...not that we are here in the presence of homosexuality (which would be anachronistic) but rather (risking anachronism) that we are in the presence of male heterosexual desire, in the form of a desire to consolidate partnership with authoritative males in and through the bodies of females.<sup>43</sup>

The passages above conflate “bodies”—male and female—with the viol, with musical sound, and with various registers of “selfe” and desire. This expansion through metaphor of Sedgwick’s “bodies of females” to include musical sound offers unique critical traction for a discussion of homosocial music making, as Brett observes in his essay on Schubert’s piano music.<sup>44</sup> If “music” itself is gendered as female, then it uniquely “serves” its male players, both by providing sensual pleasure and by acting as a “ground”—in the electrical sense—of the erotic energy generated among a group of men. Austern documents the early modern gendering of the category of “music” as female, citing, for example, the *The Praise of Musicke’s* (1586) comparison of music to a young virgin “fit to wedde mens hearts and minds unto her.”<sup>45</sup> This marital metaphor reveals a peculiar tension in Austern’s account,

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<sup>43</sup> Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, 38.

<sup>44</sup> P. Brett, “Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire,” *19th Century Music* XXI, no. 2 (1997): 154.

<sup>45</sup> Linda Phyllis Austern, “‘Alluring the Auditorie to Effeminacie’: Music and the Idea of the Feminine in Early Modern England,” *Music & Letters* 74, no. 3 (1993): 347.

one created by the idealization of female *silence* in marriage. Marriage manuals, such as Henry Smith's *A Preparatiue to Marriage* (1591), include frequent chestnuts such as, "The ornament of a woman is silence" and "As it becommeth her to keep home, so it becommeth her to keep silence."<sup>46</sup> The sound of music, conterminous with unruly feminine sexuality, is silenced by marriage. This suggests the complexity of a symbolic economy in which the male preserve of the viol consort depended on certain conceptions of music and *female* sexuality in its members' negotiation of homoerotic energy. The Italian madrigal possessed its own nuanced and powerful erotic associations, and in the next section I will discuss a similar appropriation—consort music "captured" some of the erotic musical discourse of the madrigal, and redeployed a set of conventions crafted in the heterosexual environment of madrigal singing, transfiguring them (not always entirely successfully) to choreograph musical encounters "between men."

### **John Ward and the Musical Erotics of the Madrigal**

John Ward's consort music, like that of his Jacobean contemporaries Ferrabosco II, Lupo, and Coprario, translates some of the risqué sensuality of the Italian madrigal into the consort idiom. This is a complex transformation, for the Italian madrigal developed in relation to a particular confluence of performance context, sexual economy, and musical style. In Italy, the madrigal was a vehicle for flirtation and courtly posturing. It applied a rapidly changing voice-leading

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<sup>46</sup> Fitz, "What Says the Married Woman': Marriage Theory and Feminism in the English Renaissance," 6.



technology to the pleurably stylized interactions of aristocrats and courtesans.<sup>47</sup>

The madrigal assumes a mixture of male and female singers and a highly refined set of conventions governing the public negotiation of erotic energy (as, for example, we glimpse in Straparola's *Le piacevoli notti* discussed above). It stages bodies in interaction, bodies gendered by tessitura and by a poetic language fixated on eyes, lips, hearts, sighs, kisses, etc. Consort music, of course, retains the voice-leading and formal conventions developed by madrigal composers to serve these specific ends but loses the specificity of words and the calculated balance of male and female performers. The gendering of musical roles—particularly as pertains to range—operated differently in consort music, where members of either sex could play viols of any size.

John Ward's surviving output includes both madrigals and consort music, and his work reveals a realization in the consort idiom of a musical eroticism that he cultivated in his madrigals. His consort music offers a vivid example of the simulation of desire in instrumental music, and demonstrates how the eroticized musical interactions of madrigal singing are transformed by their "translation" to instruments. This "erotics in translation" comprised, I argue, an important stylistic vocabulary that consort music borrowed from the madrigal, and served an important role in the consort's lexicon of homosociality. I discuss Ward's use of two compositional strategies in his madrigals that respond in specific ways to the

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<sup>47</sup> See L. Macy, "Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal," *The Journal of Musicology* XIV, no. 1 (1996); S. McClary, *Modal subjectivities: self-fashioning in the Italian madrigal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Laurie Stras, "Le nonne della ninfa: Feminine voices and modal rhetoric in the generations before Monteverdi," in *Gender, sexuality, and early music*, ed. Todd Borgerding, 2002, 123-165.

explicit and implicit sexual content of their texts, and examine the composer's adaptation of these same strategies to his instrumental consort music. The early modern enthusiasts of consort music that collected Ward's fantasias in manuscript anthologies would also have known his madrigals, and would have recognized their stylized musical eroticism in his instrumental music. Like the music of Coprario, Lupo, Ferrabosco, East, Ravenscroft and numerous other composers whose surviving output includes both texted madrigals and instrumental consort music, Ward's madrigals offer a unique critical foothold on the social meanings of his music for viols.<sup>48</sup>

Ward's madrigals "Flora, faire nymph" and "Phyllis the bright" demonstrate the composer's use of texture, tessitura, and voice leading to emphasize the gender differences of the singers and dramatize the eroticism of the poetry. Both pieces were published in his 1613 collection (which I discuss at more length in my chapter on melancholy) where they comprise two of three madrigals for which the composer re-set texts "Englished" by Morley and published during the 1590s.<sup>49</sup>

In "Phyllis the bright," Ward leaves no doubt about the sort of "dying" to which the shepherdess exhorts Thyrsis in this adaptation of Virgil's pastoral eclogue (in Morley's translation, the title of the madrigal is "Dafne the bright," following Virgil).

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<sup>48</sup> I am indebted in this reading to Brent Wissick, whose insightful work comparing Coprario's madrigals to his consort music I've been exposed to over the last several years.

<sup>49</sup> "In health and ease am I' (IV), by Francis Davison, a translation of Groto's '*Io, madonna, sto bene*'; 'Flora, fair nymph' (XV), from Ferretti's '*Una piaga mortal*'; and 'Phyllis the bright' (XVI), from Croce's '*Mentre la bella Dafne*.'" Helen Wilcox, "'My Mournful Style': Poetry and Music in the Madrigals of John Ward," *Music and Letters* 61, no. 1 (1980): 60-70. See also Edmund Horace Fellowes, *English Madrigal Verse, 1588-1623*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 714-5.

Phyllis the bright, when frankly she desired

Thyrsis her sweet heart to have expired,

Sweet, thus fell she a-crying,

Die for I am a-dying.<sup>50</sup>

The five-part madrigal opens with a triadic, homophonic trio in the upper parts that sweetly reinforces with female voices the name of the poem's female protagonist, Phyllis (see figure 2). After a brief imitative episode and cadence on "desired," Ward answers his reduced setting of "Phyllis" with a homophonic "Thyrsis," this time employing the full force of all five voices. The second strain again divides the ensemble by tessitura, beginning with a trio in the upper parts on the word "sweet." Ward's setting of this word echoes the beginning of the first strain, adding the word "sweet" to the complex of implied equivalence between female voices, high tessitura, and the poem's female protagonist.

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<sup>50</sup> See John Ward, *Madrigals to 3. 4. 5. and 6. Parts (published in 1613)* (London, Stainer and Bell, 1922, n.d.), 80.

Homophonic  
"female" trio

SOPRANO.  
(CANTUS.)

SOPRANO.  
(QUINTUS.)

ALTO.  
(ALTUS.)

TENOR.  
(TENOR.)

BASS.  
(BASSUS.)

Phyl - lis the bright, Phyl - lis the bright, when frank - ly

Phyl - lis the bright, Phyl - lis the bright, when frank - ly

Phyl - lis the bright, when

Phyl - lis the bright,

Phyl - lis the bright, when

m.4

she, when frank - ly she, when frank - ly she, when frank - ly

she, when frank - ly she, when frank - ly she, when frank - ly

frank - ly she, when frank - ly she, when frank - ly she de -

when frank - ly she, when frank - ly she, when frank - ly

frank - ly she, when frank - ly she, when frank - ly she de -

Homophonic  
"Thyrsis"  
all voices

m.7

she de - sir - ed Thyrsis her sweet.

she de - sir - ed Thyrsis her sweet.

- sir - ed Thyrsis her sweet.

she de - sir - ed Thyrsis her sweet.

- sir - ed Thyrsis her sweet.

m.11

heart to have ex - pir - ed,

heart to have ex - pir - ed,

heart to have ex - pir - ed,

heart to have ex - pir - ed,

heart to have ex - pir - ed,

m.15 "Sweet" female voices

2. CANTUS  
-ed, Sweet, thus fell she a cry-ing, Sweet,

QUINTUS  
-ed, Sweet, Sweet, thus fell she a cry-ing, Sweet,

-ed, Sweet, thus fell she a cry - ing, thus fell she a cry - ing,

-ed, Sweet, Sweet, thus fell she a cry - ing, thus

-ed, Sweet, Sweet, thus fell she a cry - ing, Sweet,

m.20

thus she fell a cry - ing,

thus she fell a cry - ing, Phyllis' "erotic plea" (mm.21-45) ----->

Die for I am a dy -

fell she a cry - ing, Die, for I am a

thus she fell a cry - ing, Die, for

m.25

Die, for I am a dy -

Die, for I am a dy - ing, a dy -

-ing, die, for I am a dy -

dy - ing, dy - ing,

I am a dy - ing,

m.31

-ing, a dy - ing, for I am a dy - ing,

-ing, die, for I am a

-ing, a dy - ing,

die, for I am a dy -

die, for

m.36

die,

dy - ing, die, for I am a

die, for I am a dy - ing, die,

ing, a dy - ing, die, for

I am a dy - ing, for I am a

m.41

— for I am a dy - ing. Sweet - ing.

dy - ing, die, for I am a dy - ing. Sweet - ing.

for I am a dy - ing, a dy - ing. - ing.

I am a dy - ing, a dy - ing. Sweet - ing.

dy - ing. Sweet - ing.

Bass pedal-----

Figure 36. John Ward's madrigal "Phyllis the bright" from *Madrigals to 3, 4, 5, and 6, Parts* (1613)

The expository first line of the second strain ("Sweet, thus fell she a-crying") gives way, after a short six measures, to a setting of Phyllis' erotic plea ("Die, for I am a-dying"). Here Ward reveals a debt to Morley's translated version of Ferretti's Italian original, lavishing fully 25 measures of the 45-measure composition on the text "Die, for I am a-dying." Ferretti, evidently, also recognized the musical potential of the protagonist's erotic plea, dedicating nearly a third of his madrigal to its setting. *Ward's* setting of the phrase is markedly different from the musical material that precedes it. He slows the musical motion and reduces the texture; short phrases of quavers and crotchets sung by the whole ensemble yield to trios of long descending conjunct lines of minims and breves.<sup>51</sup> The passage gradually increases

<sup>51</sup> Macy describes a similar phenomenon in Marenzio's setting of Ongara's "Stillo l'anima in pianto": "In the three-voice homophonic opening, the words, 'pianto Tirsi' trigger a series of suspensions in which first the canto and then the alto are squeezed out of the dissonant texture leaving the quinto alone to droop wanly." Macy, "Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal," 32.





crotchets that follow (see figure 4). Here, as in “Phyllis the bright” above, he pares down the ensemble to trios and quartets, replacing the rapid crotchets and quavers of the first half of the madrigal with long descending lines of minims and breves (see figure 4). Ward’s use of this musical texture clarifies any lingering ambiguity about the meaning here of “die.”

SOPRANO.  
(CANTUS.)

SOPRANO.  
(QUINTUS.)

ALTO.  
(ALTUS.)

TENOR.  
or ALTO.  
(TENOR.)

BASS.  
(BASSUS.)

Flo - ra fair Nymph, whilst

Flo - ra fair Nymph, whilst sil - ly Lambs are

Flo - ra fair Nymph, whilst sil - ly Lambs are

Whilst

Figure 37. John Ward’s “Flora, fair nymph” from *Madrigals to 3, 4, 5, and 6, Parts* (1613)

m.43

- guish, "Lachrymae" motif----- And

- guish, And die I shall,

- guish, And die I shall, die I

- guish, And die I shall, and die I

- guish, And die I shall,

m.47

die I shall, and die I

and die I

shall, and die I shall,

shall, and die I shall, and

die, and die I

m.52

shall, and die I *dim.*

shall, and die I shall, and die *dim.*

*mf* and die I shall, and *f*

and die I shall, and

die I shall,

shall,



ensemble give way to trios and quartets of long, descending conjunct lines of minims and breves. This musical topos will be familiar to players of the consort music of Ward and his Jacobean contemporaries, and serves as an important influence on similar slow passages in the music of the subsequent generation of composers that includes Jenkins, Cranford, and Lawes. In Ward's hands, this musical topos offers a glimpse of a musical erotics liberated from poetry and transformed by its translation from voices to the distinctive sexual dynamics of the viol consort.

In his four-part "Oxford" Fantasia I (VdGS no. 21), Ward adapts the musical eroticism of "Phyllis the bright" and "Flora, fair nymph" to the instrumental consort. After a series of imitative sections leavened with brief homophonic exchanges between groups of two or three players, Ward temporarily arrests the motion of the piece with a cadence in D-major followed by a minim rest in all the parts (see figure 5). Where the c-minor fantasia has up to this point featured a preponderance of crotchets and quavers and nearly continuous modulations to related keys, here Ward broadens the texture and settles into an extended passage in Bb-major/g-minor.<sup>54</sup> Like his setting of the line "die, for I am a-dying" in "Phyllis the bright" above, Ward creates a warm, lush texture by moving two of his parts in a long stepwise descent in parallel tenths with a third part (here the alto) displaced by one minim. As each part reaches the bottom of its range, it leaps up the octave to renew its languid descent where it joins in rhythmic unison with a new "partner" or finds itself the syncopated member of the trio (or, later, quartet).

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<sup>54</sup> As always, "key" is an anachronistic concept in consort music that I employ—with caution—for the sake of convenience.

21 "D major" cadence

Alto "displaced" by one minim

"I die" trio----->----->----->----->

25

"...I die (continued)..."

30

Figure 39. John Ward's "Oxford" Fantasia 1, VdGS 21

Ward's imitative "point," here, is comprised of a long, descending five-note scale in dotted minims and crotchets. In contrast to the quick, disjunct motion of the preceding episodes of the fantasia, this point invites legato bow strokes and a sense of extended, continuous lines. Players must coordinate bowings with each other, matching the dynamic envelopes of the dotted minims and caressing the sequences of crotchets using the same amount and region of the bow. Such coordination of bows is facilitated by a coordination of breath, and requires, at the minimum, a focused awareness of the bodily actions of the other players. This intimate attention

is rewarded by the lush consonances and aching dissonances of the passage, effects that are dramatically heightened by the closeness of the ensemble and that in turn “sensualize” such attention. The player whose part is rhythmically displaced (and this role shifts several times over the course of the 13-measure passage) must imitate the other two as closely as possible, and is afforded the pleasure of initiating the *frisson* of dissonant suspensions.

Passages such as this are a frequent feature of Jacobean consort music (Lupo’s three- and four-part fantasias, in particular, contain numerous examples, as do Coprario’s “madrigal” fantasias), and it seems plausible that they were recognized as an explicit point of connection between consort music and the Italian madrigal. Certainly the frequent appearance in madrigal collections of the *double entendre* “I die” motif (such those of Ward’s madrigals above) would have conditioned enthusiasts of domestic chamber music to observe the stylized musical erotics of such passages when they appeared without text in instrumental music (or when texted examples were played wordlessly on viols). But how does the absence of text and performance by instruments—as opposed to voices—reconfigure the social meaning(s) of such passages? Laura Macy suggests that the texts of sexually suggestive madrigals, such as Arcadelt’s “*Il bianco e dolce cigno*,” were crafted to excite and then diffuse the eroticism of such pieces using humor or other “textual” means.<sup>55</sup> The absence of words allows members of a viol consort to strategically ignore the *explicit* erotic connotations of such passages, but such absence does not necessarily diffuse the combination of intimacy and sensual pleasure that such

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<sup>55</sup> Macy, “Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal,” 9.

passages offer. Rather, without words to “ground” such feelings in a concrete narrative, the promiscuous exchange of musical caresses among ensemble members can make such meanings *more* difficult to control.

But the absence of text, which focuses—and provides a means to control—the erotic allegory of its setting is only one register of the shift in meaning that accompanies the appropriation of the musical language of the Italian madrigal to the instrumental viol consort. The musical language of the madrigal, as we see in the Ward examples above, serves to bring into contact in particular ways the sexual difference of the singers with the “gendered” dynamics of the music. Counterpoint, in fact, offers a curious instance of the sex/gender distinction, where *sex* refers to “biological and physiological characteristics” while *gender* refers to “socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes.”<sup>56</sup> A musical line is defined—and constrained—by its tessitura—its musical range—and may interact with the other musical lines in ways that reinforce or challenge expectations about how that particular part “should” behave in a polyphonic context. For example, a male body is required to perform the lowest voice(s) of most madrigals. This means that the idiomatic “behavior” of that voice—the preponderance of melodic fourths and fifths, the tendency to occupy the roots of chords (particularly at cadences), the use of pedal points, etc.—comes to be associated, on some level, with the male body that performs it—and in turn with the “masculinity” of the singer. In a related musical repertory (that of the monody in Monteverdi’s 1607 opera *L’Orfeo*), for example, McClary describes the “masculine” characteristics of the male character Plutone’s

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<sup>56</sup> WHO website

part. His utterances, she writes, “[are] at once legalistic in that he tends to sing the bass, and yet arbitrary in that his movements are difficult to predict [and thus] make it clear that he maintains patriarchal authority.”<sup>57</sup> The quintus (typically the second-highest part in a madrigal), on the other hand, tends to trade high notes and soar in harmony with the cantus in a stylized musical instance of the intimate female confederacy that serves as such an important trope in Renaissance Italian painting (imagine, for example, Botticelli’s intertwined Graces in the *Primavera*).<sup>58</sup> The quintus—a part that falls in the vocal range of an adult female—often supplies the major—or “sharp”—third at cadences, the “sweet” interval described by Morley and other theorists.<sup>59</sup> Because this third is frequently approached from the fifth by step through a passing fourth scale degree, the final musical motion before the resolution of the cadence often falls to the quintus, a position that requires her to lead the ensemble into the cadence.

Of course, this is a complex mapping. Melodic motion by fourths or fifths does not “mean” maleness—or, at least, that is not its *only* meaning. And certainly whatever “meaning”(s) might emerge in the moment of performance is(are) complexly conditioned by that *particular* act of performance, a tension that McClary fails to acknowledge. Yet madrigal composers exhibited a fixation in their music on erotic physicality predicated on sexual difference and beholden to contemporaneous conceptions of sex and gender. The pleasure of singing such

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<sup>57</sup> S. McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minnesota and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 45.

<sup>58</sup> See also the reading of the “female” qualities of the chant melodies of Hildegard in Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, body, and desire in medieval culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>59</sup> For more on the “sensual” qualities of the major third, see my chapter on melancholy.



madrigals results, in large part, from the crosstalk between the socially constituted sexuality of the singers and the virtual, musical “sexuality” of the polyphony. The “currency” of this interaction is the idiomatic partwriting, the voice-leading conventions that mediate between the abstract “rules” of harmony and the imperatives of aristocratic sociality. Such meanings in Ward’s English madrigals are further complicated by the possibility that the upper parts were sung by boys, rather than women—a vocal version of the artful transvestitism familiar from the Elizabethan theater. Either way, the idiomatic musical “behavior” of the high parts in madrigals would have been associated with female bodies, real or feigned. So, to pursue the metaphor, the “sex” of a part in a madrigal might be imagined to be determined by tessitura, while its “gender” might refer to the ways that its musical behavior fulfills (or fails) the tacit contrapuntal expectations of the rest of the ensemble.<sup>60</sup>

But instruments defeat sexual dimorphism—consort music allows members of either sex to play music in any tessitura. As far as I’m aware, there is no documentary evidence to suggest that the bass, tenor, or treble viols were particularly associated with members of either sex. Compositions for viol consort such as Ward’s fantasia (to say nothing of the madrigals that constituted such an important part of the Jacobean consort repertory) scrambled the musical gender conventions idiomatic to the madrigal. Consort music preserved many of the

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<sup>60</sup> The contrapuntal language of liturgical polyphony is not so different from that of the madrigal, of course, but the gendering of the parts works differently because the high parts were typically sung by sexually-immature males and because few liturgical texts foreground sexual difference. In *Modal Subjectivities* McClary explores the ways that different voices “suggest” that they are the mode-bearing voice (even when they are not!)—I draw from this attentiveness to the performance of agency of the singer/player of such a part, and the ways that such agency might have been read as gendered (transgressively or not...).

musical markers of the sexuality of its players but de-coupled them from the sex- and gender-specific roles regulated by the words and tessitura of madrigal writing. To sing, “die, for I am a-dying” with potential sexual partners in a mixed-sex context is qualitatively different from making the same utterance among potential sexual competitors. Or, to put it another way, to play music designed to dramatize erotic intimacy *blurs* the intra-group distinctions between sexual competitor and sexual partner. Just as the collusion of other men might complicate the erotic connotations of a passage of music, so an erotic passage of music might reconfigure men’s relationship to each other.

Such intimacy requires management. The stylized erotics of Ward’s consort music have no text to direct the shared pleasure of the participants into an appropriate narrative frame—there is no Phyllis or Flora to serve as a vertex of Sedgwick’s homosocial triangle. Though, as Digangi notes, “the ‘homosocial’ and the ‘homoerotic’ overlapped to a greater extent, and with less attendant anxiety, in the early modern period than would later be possible under a modern regime of sexuality,” sodomy remained a dangerous possible interpretive frame for players of consort music.<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Pittenger, Stephen Greenblatt, and others have documented the rape of choristers by their older peers and masters—the dark counterpart to the eroticism that colors some Renaissance accounts of boy sopranos and the transvestitism of the stage.<sup>62</sup> Viol playing in England, it’s worth repeating,

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<sup>61</sup> Digangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 2.

<sup>62</sup> E. Pittenger, “‘To Serve the Queere’: Nicholas Udall, Master of Revels,” in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. J. Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994); Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004); Linda Phyllis Austern, “‘No women are indeed’: the boy actor as vocal seductress in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English drama,” in *Embodied Voices: Representing female vocality in western culture*, ed. Leslie

originated in choir schools and was a popular diversion in the Inns of Court, male-only institutions that served as important incubators of Elizabethan theater. The brutal power disparity of an act of “buggery” perpetrated by an older boy on a younger one manifests in extremity the power hierarchy that underlay the Renaissance conception of relationships between men. Ward’s music makes the most of the erotically coded partwriting the composer adapted from the Italian madrigal. Players are free to do as they please with the sensual confederacy the music offers, to modulate the intimacy of their musical interactions as their comfort and ability allows. William White’s consort music, as I’ll show, seems tailored to a different sensibility—one that seeks the “succor” of passionate friendship but strategically retreats from the surrender of desire.

### **William White, Imitation, and Musical “Equality”**

William White’s six-part fantasias pair his musicians off into duets that implicate players of like-sized viols—treble with treble, tenor with tenor, and bass with bass—in a polyphonic intimacy that foregrounds the varied valences of *imitation*. Imitation, of course, served as the primary organizing principle, on the line level, of consort music. At the same time, it was a deeply resonant concept central to Renaissance aesthetics, appearing in many guises in criticism, pedagogy,

and literary and dramatic works.<sup>63</sup> From the emulation of Christ that served as the basic precept of Christian behavior to the literary imitations of classical models like Campion's Latin epigrams, imitation was understood as a ubiquitous feature of human behavior. The ability to compose iterative "points" was taught as a basic and essential skill to students of composition—the pedagogical canons that I discuss in my chapter on devotional practice, for example, are essays in imitation, and Coprario's manuscript treatise on consort music, *Rules how to compose* (c1610-16), treats little else.

Performers of Renaissance music are aware that imitation defines musical—and thus social—relationships. The imitative entrances of the opening episode of a fantasia shape the disposition of the performers towards each other as well as the corporation of the ensemble. Qualities of imitation create a distinctive social energy that inflects the players' experience of the remainder of the piece. Gibbons' fantasias, for example, demand a metric vigilance and musical surefootedness. His openings pit player against player, making of his episodes a musical "state of nature" in which lines vie for metrical dominance. Ravenscroft, on the other hand, offers opening points of predictable length and symmetrical contour, iterations like the even marble steps to Parnassus or the logical succession of the Books of Moses. Gibbons makes players sit forward on their chairs and subdivide, poised to join the fray, while Ravenscroft invites his musicians to sit back, perhaps with closed eyes, to await the satisfying inevitability of their turn.

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<sup>63</sup> For more on Renaissance conceptions of imitation, see Brown's summary in Howard Mayer Brown, "Emulation, Competition, and Homage: Imitation and Theories of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35, no. 1 (1982): 38.

As a metaphor for relationships between men, imitation in early modern England offered a rich yield of widely divergent meanings. It could serve as a figure for an ennobling equality, where iteration revealed an underlying identity, the “one heart which dwelleth in two bodies.” Or it could betray a profligate inconstancy, a tendency Shepherd ascribes to one of several “(homo)sexual types,” the “fop.” Marston’s Luscus, for example, “hath his *Ganimede*, His perfum’d shee-goate, smooth kemb’d, high fed.”<sup>64</sup> As Shepherd describes, “the fop is prepared to adopt the very specific behavior patterns associated with each sex object. He is unmanly in that he has no constancy, no autonomous identity...”<sup>65</sup> Nicholas Udall’s character Mathew Merygreeke, a fawning hanger-on in *Ralph Roister Doister* (1566), embodies yet another register of “unmanly” imitation. According to Pittenger, Udall based Merygreeke on the flattering “parasite” Gnatho in *Eunuchus* (c.160BCE) by the Classical Roman playwright Terence. Udall’s surviving translation of *Eunuchus* is striking for the specificity with which it invokes imitation as a figure for parasitization.

Souche men do I folowe at the taile...What so ever they say, I comende it, that if they denie the same ageyne, that also I comende: if a man say nay, I say nay also: if he say ye, I say yea to.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> John Marston, *The scourge of villanie* (London, 1598), 3.39-40.

<sup>65</sup> S. Shepherd, “What’s so funny aboyt ladies’ tailors? A survey of some male (homo)sexual types in the Renaissance,” *Textual Practice* 6, no. 1 (1992): 23.

<sup>66</sup> Pittenger, “‘To Serve the Queere’: Nicholas Udall, Master of Revels,” 180.

Gnatho's imitation, like that of the "fop" Luscus, is figured in sodomitical terms ("souche men do I folowe at the taile") in Udall's translation. To imitate another, to "say as he sayth," entails a potent mix of self-effacement and affectation, a combination with markedly homoerotic connotations in Renaissance England.

Imitation thus served as a flexible metaphor for a range of homosocial relationships, from the "acquaintance" celebrated by Braithwait to the slyly sodomitical of Udall's Merygreeke. In the context of consort music, musical imitation is powerful. It exceeds the symbolic, deploying its interlocutors in *actual* interactions that stage its range of potential meanings. If the "harmonic" interplay of two music voices offers the pleasures of dissonance and consonance, then imitation adds an inescapable dimension of power. Canonic duets, such as the Continental *bicinia* that in England served as the basis of the pedagogical canon repertory, make of their performers leaders and followers, teachers and students, "tops" and "bottoms." Consort music refines and intensifies this capacity, particularly when its players are paired off into imitative duets that are "witnessed" by the rest of the ensemble (as we'll see in the music of William White).

Pleasure and power—we've seen this combination before. "Sexuality," in Suzanne Cusick's formulation, "is a practice which allows movement within a field defined by power, intimacy and pleasure."<sup>67</sup> "Musicality," she observes, is coterminous with "sexuality" to the extent that it entails relationships defined by movement within this field. White's imitative duets implicate their players in just

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<sup>67</sup> S.G. Cusick, "On a Lesbian Relation with Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight," in *In Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. P. Brett, E. Wood, and G.C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), 71.

this manifold, embroiling them in interactions of pleasure, power, and intimacy—terms that, as we’ve seen, mark the territory of the “masculine friend” in Renaissance England. White’s surviving music includes six six-part fantasias, music that is widely distributed in extant sources and which likely dates from the second decade of the seventeenth century.<sup>68</sup> Little biographical information is known about White, but his mention by Mace in *Musick’s Monument*, Charles Butler in *The Principles of Musik* (1636), Playford in *Musick’s Recreation*, and Simpson in *A Compendium of Practical Music* (1667) attests to his place among the pantheon of Jacobean composers. His surviving consort music exhibits a textural variety and harmonic language reminiscent of Ward or Simon Ives and at times demands an instrumental virtuosity that calls to mind the music of Lawes or William Cranford.

White’s six-part fantasias are marked by a frequent reduction of the texture to two-, three-, and four-part writing, a strategy that offers an easy means of structural organization and musical variety. These reduced textures also serve to foreground the shifts of alliances between players that serve as one of consort music’s main attractions. In five- and six-part music, duets and trios are fun. They afford a sudden and distinctive contraction of attention—details of sound, tempo, and execution that are swallowed by the sound of six instruments are revealed as sites of intimate interaction. Participants are exposed to each other and to those auditors with rests in their parts in ways that can be exciting and pleasurably vulnerable. Modern consort enthusiasts often report that their “favorite” moments in a particular play-through are those in which they found themselves in a duet or

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<sup>68</sup> William White, *The six fantasias in six parts for viols (SSTTBB)*, ed. Patrice Connelly (Ottawa, Canada: Dove House Editions, 1983), 1.

trio with other player(s) with whom they had, or discovered, a particular musical affinity. The duets in White's six-part fantasias, which add the risk and potential reward of a certain elevated virtuosity, are justly famous among modern players.

The heart of White's second six-part fantasia (VdGS 2) pairs off each set of equally sized viols into three duets of roughly seven or eight common-time measures (see figure 6).<sup>69</sup> My analysis will focus on three different registers of "equality" that dynamically shape the relationships between each set of parts: order of entrance (who enters first and thus "leads" the point of imitation?), registration (who's higher?), and technical virtuosity (whose part is showier?). As I'll show, the negotiation of "equality" served as an important dimension of male friendship, one that helped regulate the "pleasure/power/intimacy" triad that characterized (homo)sociality.

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<sup>69</sup> Here I follow Patrice Connelly, who elected to bar fantasia II in common time in her Dove House edition of White's six-part fantasias.



Treble duet opening point (canon at the 4th)

55

60

"bicinia" cadence

"sweet" interlude followed by hockets

60

65

"bicinia" cadence

65

70

Treble II disjunct motive appears  
(nearly) twice in each voice

65

70

75

80

85

Tenor duet

m.70

Bass duet

"bicinia" cadence

Bass I "nasty" melodic thirds

Bass duet divisions - - - - - >

Figure 40. Duets in William White's fantasia 2, VdGS 2

The trebles lead off, launching into a canonic duet at the fourth in measure 56 after a decisive homophonic cadence on A in the lower parts. Treble I begins the new point—a figure comprised of a series of ornamented descending arpeggios—on e5. Treble II follows a crotchet later on a5, the highest fretted note on the instrument. Thus treble I “leads” the polyphony, introducing the motivic material echoed by treble II, but treble II has a distinctly higher part, one that demands the poised virtuosity of an entrance high on the top string. The canon descends through several ornamented arpeggios to alight two measures later on a cadence in a.

For his cadence, White adopts a technique uncommon in consort music but familiar from the *bicinia* of Lassus and other Continental composers. The cadential

final is only actually played by *one* of the two players—here treble II—though both parts approach the unison a in the orthodox manner (a 2-3 suspension resolved downward from the a to the g# leading tone in treble I). Instead of treble I's expected arrival with treble II on the unison, White supplies a quaver rest rather than the anticipated a, leaving treble I “hanging” on a g# until he begins the next episode of the duet with a pickup to measure 59.<sup>70</sup>

This next episode begins with a measure of conjunct quavers in both parts in thirds and sixths, a “sweet” interlude before the hocketing quavers and semiquavers that follow, led again by treble I. The phrase ends in measure 62 with another “*bicinia*” cadence, this time leaving treble II hanging on the c# leading tone. Following his quaver rest, *treble II* now picks up the lead, introducing a disjunct melody in quavers that treble I imitates one minim later at the same pitch. Treble II's disjunct melody lasts exactly one semibreve before it is repeated verbatim in the same voice. Thus we hear this new motive complete almost four times at the same pitch as it bounces between the two voices. Treble I's final repetition (the motive's fourth appearance beginning in measure 63) is interrupted by a measure of semiquavers in both parts that bring the duet to its closing cadence in D in the middle of measure 65. Here, both voices play the cadential resolution, but treble II drops down to the chordal third—f#4—rather than sharing d5 with treble I.

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<sup>70</sup> Though this technique might appear to be pragmatically motivated—a rest allows the player of the “incomplete” part a moment to prepare the next entrance—a wealth of alternative compositional solutions to the ubiquitous “problem” of maintaining continuity after a cadence are revealed in the Jacobean consort repertory. A full survey is impossible and unnecessary here, but the most common solution involves having the “continuing” voice resolve the cadence on a quaver or crotchet and begin the next point on the subsequent quaver or crotchet, a phenomenon that often appears misleadingly on the page as a rapid “leap” in quick note values. In fact, the first of this pair is typically the end of one phrase and the following member is the beginning of the continuing phrase.

Now (measure 65) the tenors enter in canon at the fifth with the same point that began the treble duet, tenor I beginning and tenor II following a crotchet later. The tenor duet lasts seven measures, and is comprised of four short phrases separated by “*bicinia*” cadences. At each cadence the “lead” switches, with the voice that had been “left hanging” beginning the new phrase. Relatedly, the relative range of each voice within each entrance changes at each cadence, so, for example, tenor II begins the second phrase of the duet a fifth higher than tenor I while in the third phrase tenor I begins but tenor II follows at the unison. A careful examination reveals a surprisingly systematic alternation of entrance order and registration in these seven measures.

The basses, of course, get the divisions, a compositional choice in keeping with the virtuoso writing for the lowest parts in the consort music of Gibbons, Ravenscroft, and Cranford. The bass duet begins (measure 71) like the others—the by-now familiar motivic material varied by entrance order and registration—but is intensified with a four-measure “duel” of squirrely semiquavers that brings the three duets to an exciting close. Here White exploits the extreme low register of the basses, sending bass II down to his open low d string twice amid a flurry of divisions. The Bass I part remains in the baritone range but includes a nasty sequence of exposed melodic thirds approaching the cadence that requires the player to pick his poison, choosing either to execute an awkward series of successive high-speed string crossings or an equivalently challenging sequence of left hand shifts.

Compared to participation in a six-part texture, in which each player's attention to the ensemble flits rapidly between the five other parts, White's duets offer a stunningly pronounced and sustained period of attention between members of each pair. The duets are extremely *intimate*. Constant motion in both parts in small note values requires an intense focus on the other player in order to synchronize attacks and match articulation. Imitation demands an extension of the temporal horizons of one's attention: you can't just listen to what is happening *now*, but must also remember how your partner played that phrase that began a moment ago. Voices twine around each other, cross and re-cross, and approach cadences with dissonant suspensions that are as close as diatonic music allows. To play these duets effectively, one might be inclined to follow Braithwaite's advice in *The English Gentlemen* (1630) on how to cleave to a true friend.

Keepe him then, and be constant in your choice, holding him so  
firmely knit unto you, as if hee were individually united to your selfe;  
for a friend...is a second-selfe, and therefore as impossible to be  
divided from you, as you from your selfe.<sup>71</sup>

When played well, the duets call to mind Montaigne's essay on friendship, published in English translation by John Florio in 1603. "In the amitie I speake of," Florio translates, male friends

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<sup>71</sup> Braithwaite, *The English Gentleman*, 279.

entermixe and confound themselves one in the other, with so  
 universall a commixture, that they weare out, and can no more finde  
 the seame that hath conjoynd them together.<sup>72</sup>

White's duets offer a potent mix of two registers of "commixture." The polyphony itself choreographs proximity as parts "entermixe and confound themselves one in the other"; at the same time, executing the part-writing effectively demands obsessive attention to the *physical presence* of one's duet partner—his bowing and breath and the subtle bodily movements that communicate the finest details of interpretation and that "firmly knit" duet partners together.<sup>73</sup>

But there is also evidence that White sought to limit the intimacy of his duets. His striking use of "*bicinia*" cadences denies participants the *frisson* of converging on a unison. Such a convergence, which in this situation would demand that every few measures players play exactly the same note at the same time on similarly sized—and thus timbrally indistinguishable—viols, might be imagined to pose too great a threat of engulfment—intimacy to the point of loss of identity. Such loss possesses strongly erotic overtones. In his essay on same-sex desire in the Renaissance, Bruce Smith suggests that "desire is all about 'Me' wanting to incorporate 'not me.'" "On this point," Smith continues,

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<sup>72</sup> Quoted in J. Masten, "My Two Dads: Collaboration and the Reproduction of Beaumont and Fletcher," in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. J. Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 280.

<sup>73</sup> For a reading of the (homoerotic) intimacy of duet playing in an entirely different musical context, see Brett, "Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire," 154.

Plato, Aristotle, and Freud are in agreement...In the act of sexual union self and object become one. Beauty, the useful or pleasurable person, the female breast: with each of these objects, desire is fulfilled when difference is obliterated. The satisfaction of desire is in making the “not me” mine.<sup>74</sup>

Madrigal composers, of course, relied on the homology between human desire and the conventions of voice leading that make independent lines “seek” the unison. This “musical” tendency might partly explain the “mysterious mechanism of desire” McClary detects in Arcadelt’s *Il bianco e dolce cigno* that “fuels a sense of agency even as it seems to come unbidden from a source nonidentical with the Self.”<sup>75</sup> White’s “*bicinia*” cadences withhold most instances of charged unison convergence in a move that offers, variously, an intensification of desire through systematic frustration or a retreat from an indecorous intimacy.

But is there a tension between encomia to friendship like those of Braithwaite and Montaigne (above) that suggest that true friends are “impossible to be divided” and desire’s mandate to seek out the “obliteration” of difference? Perhaps, though this tension is, at least in part, anachronistic. As Brett writes, “[i]t is a modern categorical obsession that draws an unhelpful line between same-sex sexual acts and other forms of homoerotic activity, like playing Schubert duets.”<sup>76</sup> Or, I contend, playing consort music. Modern understandings of sexuality tend to

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<sup>74</sup> B.R. Smith, “Making a difference: Male/male ‘desire’ in tragedy, comedy, and tragi-comedy,” in *Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. S. Zimmerman (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 127.

<sup>75</sup> McClary, *Modal subjectivities: self-fashioning in the Italian madrigal*, 59.

<sup>76</sup> Brett, “Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire,” 156.

complicate in two ways an investigation of the pleasure/power/intimacy I perceive as an important dimension to the experience of this repertory. The first is that as modern subjects we tend to map “identity” using the coordinates of sexual object choice—whether a person “is” “homosexual” or not is determined based on the sex of those with whom they have genital contact. Thus the historiography of pleasurable homosocial activities like playing piano duets or consort music gets distracted by anachronistic questions about the sexual “identity” of the participants. The second is that we have a very low resolution understanding of physical intimacy, pleasure, and eroticism (particularly in same-sex interactions)—the sharing of pleasure between members of the same sex is invariably understood as “sexual” and as furnishing information about the “identity” of the interlocutors.

Yet the expression of desire between men was not unregulated. Alan Bray cautions us to remember that the period’s radically different strategies for assimilating interactions of pleasure/power/intimacy should not be understood as a *tolerance* for sodomy, a term that referred to a wide range of “disorderly” sexual behavior. Renaissance Platonism left intact the view that “homosexuality was an abomination,” Bray writes, “and it is difficult to exaggerate the fear and loathing of [it] to be read in the literature of the time.”<sup>77</sup>

White’s duets, I believe, are crafted to allow their participants to enjoy a complexly staged male friendship, one that partakes of pleasure and intimacy but that offers various strategies through which its players can regulate the quality and connotation of their relationships. Specifically, a musically figured “equality”

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<sup>77</sup> Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 62.



regulates the power/pleasure/intimacy that the partwriting offers the players. Social equality served as one check against the “sodomitical” interpretation that threatened the sharing of pleasure between men. Bray notes the “uncompromising symmetry” between the “masculine friend” and the “sodomite” in Renaissance literature. These two figures prompted dramatically different reactions; “the one was universally admired, the other execrated and feared.” In his reading, early modern accounts of relationships between men could be inflected to signal one or the other of these figures with the omission of certain key conventions, one of which was an assertion of equality of status between the two interlocutors.<sup>78</sup> With reference to Gaveston’s opening speech in Marston’s *Edward II*, a touchstone of early modern homoerotic desire, Bruce Smith notes that “eroticized differences are by and large political differences: king/commoner, this man/all other men, we two/the world.”<sup>79</sup> In the homosocial environment of the viol consort, in which men shared the pleasure of playing music together, “equality” likely served an important symbolic role. The registers of musical equality that White so carefully composed into his duets are all easily transposed into other social domains. Masques created an elaborate pageantry around the order of entrance of courtiers, relative height (of buildings and of one’s physical position in relation to the monarch) was regulated by legal statute, and instrumental virtuosity offered a stylized form of heraldic accomplishments like fencing and shooting. White’s duets allow for the pleasurable, stylized performance of equality before a group of male peers (in both senses of the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 51

<sup>79</sup> Smith, “Making a difference: Male/male ‘desire’ in tragedy, comedy, and tragi-comedy,” 133.

word), a performance that strategically channeled the threat of “sodomitical” pleasure into the conventions of masculine friendship.

### **Thomas Mace, “Roguish” Tailors, and a Defense of the Consort**

Thomas Mace’s ornery and polemical encomium to the viol consort, appended to his voluminous treatise on playing the lute *Musick’s Monument* (1676), offers a final perspective on the sexual politics of consort playing. It is an anxious document, one that responds, in its defensive opening salvos, to some of the same questions that motivated this chapter: How are gentlemen to make sense of the bewildering intimacy of playing consort music together? And do existing frames, such as “amity” and “passionate friendship,” adequately contain these interactions, distinguishing them from those that might feel—or be interpreted to feel—improper, chaotic, “sodomitical.” *Musick’s Monument* is colored by nostalgia for the Caroline aristocracy of the author’s youth, his tone that of an old man dismayed by the alien tastes of a culture transformed by decades of political turmoil and the ascendancy of French fashion that accompanied the Court’s return from exile in Paris.

Mace opens the final section of his treatise, “Concerning the Viol, and Musick in General,” with a lengthy and vociferous digression about “inconvenient” fashion.

I remember there was a Fashion, not many Years since, for Women in their Apparel to be so Pent up by the Straitness, and Stiffness of their

Gown-Shoulder-Sleeves, that They could not so much as Scratch Their Heads, for the Necessary Remove of a Biting Louse...<sup>80</sup>

In a stock bit of Restoration misogyny, Mace condemns women who embraced this fashion as “Viragoes, who were us’d to Scratch their Husbands Faces or Eyes, and to pull them down by the Coxcombes.” Such women are the victims of “roguish taylors,” who “abuse” women by converting them to “fashionists.” These tailors, though, are only acting “in Revenge of some of the Curst Dames their Wives, who were too Lofty, and Man-keen.”

With this reactionary excurses on “fashion,” Mace opens a nostalgia-limned account of consort playing with a vociferous policing of gender transgression, of “man-keen” dames and “abused,” emasculated men. Mace’s misogyny, it’s worth noting, is consistent with “almost every one of the antifeminist tracts and satires of the day,” according to Linda Fitz.<sup>81</sup> In *A godlie forme of householde gouernment* (1598), for example, Robert Cleaver insisted that the avoidance of extravagance constitutes one of three principles of a dutiful wife, a role “comprehended in these three points. First, that shee reuerence her husband. Secondly, that she submit her self, and bee obedient vnto him. And lastly, that she doo not weare gorgeous apparel.”<sup>82</sup>

Mace’s *male* target is the tailor, the supplier of “gorgeous apparel” and a character recognized by Simon Shepherd as another “homosexual type” (we met his

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<sup>80</sup> T. Mace, *Musick’s Monument* (London, 1676), 232.

<sup>81</sup> Fitz, “‘What Says the Married Woman’: Marriage Theory and Feminism in the English Renaissance,” 9.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*

“fop” earlier in this chapter).<sup>83</sup> Tailors, in Shepherd’s account, were portrayed as lecherous, gossipy, and possessing of a slight build (a professional necessity in an occupation requiring close physical proximity with clients). He argues that the tailor’s lechery “may be linked with [his] effeminacy and gossip as a group of symptoms of undisciplined manhood, which respects neither the proprieties of personal reputation nor the untouchability of another man’s wife.”<sup>84</sup> The early modern idiom “nine tailors make a man” registers a sexual economy in which lecherous men who enable improper class mobility through the cultivation of fashion are figured as threatening and “inverting” masculine aspirations.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, the tailor’s lechery—an “out of place” desire for a married or otherwise unavailable woman—was a conceptual counterpart to his ability to act as an agent of improper—“out of place”—sartorial class mobility. Mace’s tailor thus embodied a double threat to early modern masculinity: he was “abused” by his wife, and simultaneously symbolized a subversion of the “equality” that served as such an important bulwark against “improper” interpretations of homoerotic behaviors. The tailor makes the clothes that make the man, in Mace’s anxious account; fashionable “adornments” that threaten to obscure the equality that Bray argues served as a guarantor of masculine friendship, the precondition of the shared pleasures of music making.

From Mace’s vantage point in the 1670s, the stakes were changing. *Musick’s Monument* was published at a turning point in the history of sexuality in England,

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<sup>83</sup> Shepherd, “What’s so funny aboyt ladies’ tailors? A survey of some male (homo)sexual types in the Renaissance,” 22.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 22.

when, as Bray has described, the *molly* first emerged as a distinctive (homo)sexual identity.<sup>86</sup> This term—that referred to men who frequented “molly houses” in and around London, emerged, according to Bray, in part because of the increased visibility that resulted from a rash of high-profile raids and subsequent trials for sodomy. Mace’s anxiety may reflect the cultural shift that had occurred since the 1630s and 40s (the halcyon days of “all those choice consorts”)—when a wider range of intimate behavior between men could more easily be incorporated into homosocial configurations like “amity.” Mace’s curious fixation on emasculating “fashion” and his invocation of the sexually deviant tailor represents an attempt to contain the dangerous hint of sexual deviance that managed to cling to the viol as a token of illicit desire and to the consort as a homosocial space. The heart of his argument polices the masculine domain of consort music—homoerotic desire must not be allowed to contaminate “the Sprightly, Generous, and Heroick Viol,” just as French fashion mustn’t hold sway over English good sense and musical taste.<sup>87</sup> “Effeminate” fashion may govern “slight and trivial things,” Mace says, but he “cannot understand, how Arts and Sciences should be subject unto any such Phantastical, Giddy, or Inconsiderate Toyish Conceits, as ever to be said to be in Fashion, or out of Fashion.”

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<sup>86</sup> Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 81.

<sup>87</sup> Mace, *Musick’s Monument*, 233.

## Conclusion

Throughout its history, consort music staged pleasurable and intimate interactions among its players, interactions that were at once musical and social. Jacobean composers such as John Ward adapted the madrigal's capacity to musically simulate desire to the consort, as we saw in VdGS 21, his first "Oxford" fantasia. This capacity was complexly transformed by the absence of female performers and the narrative "controls" of text in the instrumental environment of the consort. Here, stylized musical eroticism—such as the double-voiced "I die" topos—was incorporated into the consort's male homosociality. Though physical (and even erotic) intimacy between men was tolerated, and even encouraged, as one dimension of "passionate friendship," Elizabethan culture was deeply intolerant of the category of "sodomy," which referred to a wide range of dissident sexual acts. William White's consort music, I argue, offers musical strategies that allow its players to modulate their intimacy with each other as it constructs their relationship along an axis of "equality," a concept that served as an important bulwark against potential "sodomitical" interpretation.

The difference in attitudes about homoeroticism and consort music between the late Elizabethan milieu of the Inns of Court (the Johnson, Marston, and Drayton) and Mace's anxious polemics reveals, in part, a historical shift in the values that shaped relationships between men. The "retrospective" criticism of consort music to which *Musick's Monument* belongs—the treatises of Roger and Francis North, Pepys' diary, Anthony Wood's biographical jottings, Purcell's famous catch (and other

“musical” forms of commentary, such as his consort music itself), as well as the musical histories by Burney and Hawkins, register the “homosocial” meanings of consort in a range of ways. It is outside of the scope this chapter (let alone its conclusion!) to fully engage with this material. Nevertheless, my suspicion is that Burney’s utter dismissal of the consort repertory, for example, in the *General History*, or the persistent appearance of the viol in the musical and historical traces of Purcell’s relationship with his “very intimate friend” Sudbean Ghostling, reveal a continued negotiation of the terms of male homosociality and homoeroticism.

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